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LITURGY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

SYMBOLS IN LIFE AND WORSHIP

M. Amaladoss

THEOLOGY OF LITURGY;

LITURGICAL TRADITION AND TRADITIONS

Paul Puthenangady

THE LITURGICAL RITES IN INDIA;

THEIR ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Thomas Elavanal

LITURGICAL INCULTURATION IN INDIA;

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF EXPERIMENTATION

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THE LITURGICAL CRISIS IN THE

SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

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WAYS OF WORSHIP IN HINDUISM;

SOME GUIDELINES FOR AN INDIAN CHRISTIAN LITURGY

Thomas Manickam

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JEEVADHARA

The People of God

**LITURGY OF THE CHURCH
IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT**

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Editorial

Theology of the Church would tell us that Indian Churches are not mere extensions or offshoots of the Roman Church or Chaldean Church or Antiochean Church or German Lutheran Church or American Baptist Church. Indian Churches are supposed to be the outcome of an incarnation of the Church of Christ in the Indian socio-cultural soil. But the truth is far from this theological assumption. The Churches here in India, as their very names indicate — Roman or Latin Church, Syrian Churches, Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church etc., are more Roman or Syrian or German than Indian. They have not outgrown their origins, whether western or eastern. The Indian Churches have failed in developing their own identity. Worship or Liturgy of the Churches in India is a typical example. The Churches here just copy the Roman or Syrian or German ways of worship rather than respond to the challenge of developing authentically Indian or indigenous forms of worship. Moreover some Churches are vehemently opposing all attempts at liturgical adaptation and inculturation and fighting for the total restoration of the ancient liturgy they had from abroad. As liturgy is the centre of the activity of each local Church, the question of its authenticity is an ecclesiological issue and not merely a pastoral problem.

In order to have the right understanding of liturgy it must be approached from all perspectives related to religion and worship. The anthropological, psychological and sociological aspects of religion and worship must be investigated. The historical origins of Christian liturgy,

its development and different ramifications down the centuries in the different cultural settings must be closely studied. Socio-cultural and religious heritage as well as the presentsituation of India must be background in any meaningful discussion on the liturgy of the Indian Churches. After Vatican II liturgical adaptations and experimentations were made in many Churches at different levels in India, though today there seems to be a stalemate or impasse. Was there something wrong with our liturgical experimentations? Why all that stopped on a sudden? Any fresh attempt at liturgical inculturation must seriously look into these matters with honesty and objectivity. This Number of *Jeevadhara* would like to have a review of the whole situation, and call for a fresh understanding of the liturgy of the Church.

Man is a symbolic and social animal who attains his fulfilment through communication and communion which, in turn, is done by means of signs and symbols. Culture and religion are the network of such symbolic structures offering to man a meaningful world vision. Religious rituals are structures of symbolic action which are meant to create community and communion and thus help the individual to grow and be integrated into the community. As man and his world are pluralistic, so is the world of symbolic systems and they are subjected to change. When old symbols become less transparent and outdated and thus fail to communicate, new symbols have to be created. M. Amaladoss deals with these and similar questions in his article in this issue.

For a theological understanding of the liturgy we have to make a fundamental distinction between the Christian Liturgical Tradition and the different liturgical traditions of the different Churches. For example, Eucharist belongs to the core of the Christian Liturgical Tradition, whereas the ways in which it is celebrated in different Churches are determined by the socio-cultural factors of the people,

place and time. In fact there are many such eucharistic traditions as different cultural expressions of the same Tradition. Faithful handing down of the Christian Liturgical Tradition in fact demands not the absolutization of its particular cultural expression, but its genuine inculturation in the symbols and categories of the people which alone could make it alive and meaningful to them. Paul Puthenangady highlights this point and says that what we have today is only some liturgical traditions in India and not any real *Indian* liturgical Tradition.

The Apostles did not take with them any fixed form of worship, but only the Christ experience which they shared with the people and gave expressions to differently in the different cultural settings. Gradually by the end of the 4th century different liturgical rites and families were formed. Thomas Elavanal outlines the origin and development of the three Catholic liturgical Rites in India — Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin. As soon as the growth and development of these traditions became stagnant and petrified, they become outdated and irrelevant. The historical process must go on, if Christianity and its liturgy want to be alive and meaningful to peoples and nations of today. Closely related to this is the article of Louis Malieckal who examines the process of liturgical inculturation in India in these three Rites. Since Vatican II, highlighting the different experimentations and the problems and prospects involved. The Indian Church is in fact divided on the various issues of liturgical inculturation and we are today at a deadlock. Recently the tension has been felt much more in the Syro-Malabar Church, and Antony Nariculam analyses the liturgical crisis of this Church, in the context of the recent document on this subject by the Roman Congregation for the Oriental Churches. In the last article Thomas Manickam introduces the Hindu ways of worship in its complexity and plurality and invites the readers to reflect upon it and evolve some guidelines for an inculturated Indian Christian liturgy.

No blueprint is offered here for an Indian Christian liturgy. All the Christian liturgical rites and different modes of worship in India should become more and more Indian in their cultural and symbolic expressions shedding their foreign attire inherited from the past. Here the plurality of Indian cultural and religious traditions offers itself as a challenge and an opportunity. All present Rites in India, each in its own way, should become more inculturated and pastorally relevant and upto date, and in the long run some convergence may be possible.

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Symbols in Life and Worship

Symbols are everywhere in the human world. When two people meet each other their mutual recognition and pleasure will be shown in a handshake, a *namaste* or a deep bow according to the culture to which they belong. Here we have in a nutshell the phenomenon of symbols in human and social life: we have an action that is also an experience, namely mutual welcome; we have a symbolic gesture that expresses it; the symbolic gesture varies from culture to culture and the variation is not arbitrary, but meaningful: a handshake expresses fellowship, a *namaste* indicates respect and a deep bow shows humility; the gesture may be insincere when action does not correspond to experience. Normally we do not advert to these various aspects of a symbol when we use it. All the same we use symbols everywhere and at all times. Our language is a system of signs and symbols. Starting with the symbol of greeting, our social life is structured by symbolic gestures and rituals: communications, exchange of gifts and celebrations. The officials in any social group—the army, the police, the religious minister — have their insignia and uniforms. Even political parties have their flags and slogans. The world of culture is deeply symbolic, though the medium is verbal in poetry, tone in music, colour and form in painting, stone and shape in sculpture and architecture, and gesture and action in drama and dance. To think of religion is to evoke the various images of the divine, the rich narratives of its manifestation, the rituals that assure a communication between the human and the divine and the works of art in which people celebrate their spiritual experience. A person cannot escape symbols even in his sleep: his dreams are full of them.

Symbolic, social animals

Just reflecting on this variegated phenomena of symbols in human life, without becoming abstrusely philosophical, we can make a twofold affirmation: The human person is a symbolic and social animal. I shall try, not to justify this affirmation, but rather to explain it and show how closely the two aspects are linked.

Animals react instinctively to stimuli in any situation. In this context they may even have a 'gestalt', a picture of the situation which regulates or specifies their instinctive reaction. But only human beings seem to be capable of reflecting or evoking a past situation, of imagining or looking forward to a future situation and planning accordingly, of transcending a situation and refusing to react to present stimuli and finally of creating a new situation. We are capable of thinking, of imagining, of creating. We have created the world of culture which we inhabit and which structures our personal and social life. Language, systems and rules of kinship, myths and rituals, art in all its forms — these bear witness to the creative intelligence of humans.

The reverse aspect of this awareness of being symbolic animals is the realization that we are not pure intelligences. We are spirits in bodies. This means that we cannot think, imagine, reflect, create etc. except 'through symbols. Our feelings and experiences acquire sensibility' — i.e., expressed in and accessible to the senses — through symbolic gestures and representations. Our body necessarily mediates our relation to the world and to other people. When I meet another person, I may feel happy at seeing him. This happiness finds expression and manifests itself to the other at least through a smile and perhaps also through a gesture of welcome. But unlike other animals I can simulate my feeling: I can smile without real joy in my heart. Therefore while we cannot do without symbols, they remain only mediations which we can manipulate to suit our purpose.

To say that symbols are mediations is to say that they

are intelligible only in the context of a social group, because symbols are not meaningful except in the context of communication with another. Only mad people normally speak to themselves. That is why a symbolic animal is also a social animal. Or conversely it is because human beings live in society that they have created a rich world of symbols. We may exercise our intelligence in scientific thought without immediate reference to others. But we are capable of sharing — communicating — such thoughts with others.

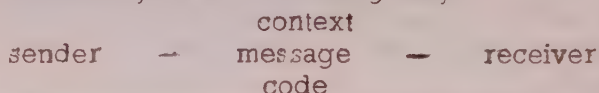
Such communication among human beings is possible only because they share common symbol systems. The most obvious example is language. But this is also true of other codes of communication: the traffic lights, for example. There is no use expressing my thought or feeling in a symbol, if it is not understood by some one else. Therefore we humans share symbols or rather systems of symbols. A culture is actually characterized by and made up of such symbol systems.

Of course we can choose to live at a level of immediate physical contacts through touch, spontaneous expressions and instinctive reactions. We would then be living in an animal, not in a human world. That is why symbols and society mutually involve each other: there is no society without communication; there is no communication without symbols and there are no symbols without society.

Symbols and communication

Because of this close link between symbol and society one should not consider symbols in isolation. Symbols are meaningful only in the context of communication and communication itself is significant only in the context of some common action. This common action does not mean that we have to do something outside of ourselves. A greeting, for example, is not merely a mutual recognition of presence, but an acknowledgement of it. This is an action that establishes a relationship of community between the two people who greet each other.

The process of communication may be analysed into five elements. A consideration of these elements will also throw light on the phenomenon of symbols and their role in communication and community. These five elements are: a person sends a message to another using a code in a particular life-situation or context. One could present them schematically in the following way:



We shall briefly analyse these five elements. My aim is not to develop a theory of communication but to understand symbols better. This aim would obviously determine the limits of my analysis.

The sender, who takes the initiative in communication, has a feeling, thought or experience which has to be conveyed to the receiver. This person will have to express it in a communication medium: a language, colour, sound, form, image etc. What is important for us from the point of view of understanding symbol is the relationship between experience and expression. One has an experience. On the one hand one does not really understand it till one has objectified it in some medium. On the other hand one can feel that a particular expression is not fully adequate to one's experience. It is this inadequacy that gives the surplus of meaning carried by the symbol. This excess of meaning is not clearly perceived or possessed independently of its expression in some medium. The medium — symbol — is not simply a vehicle which is charged with a meaning that is possessed independently of it. The first expression is not a translation into symbol of a meaning that is otherwise possessed in a private, interior, adequate way. But at the same time one feels that there is more to one's experience than what one has been capable of expressing. One may express it better and another less. But no one probably succeeds in saying all that one would like. Obviously we are not thinking here of bare statement of facts — if such bare facts or statements exist!

The receiver hears or perceives the message. One is confronted with a set of symbols. One has to interpret them to understand the message that these symbols seek to convey. Such an understanding means it has an experience, at least of knowing something that one did not know before. One's capacity to interpret is conditioned by one's knowledge of the medium, of the situation, and of the other person who communicates. One's experience will also be conditioned by one's own capacity and other past experiences. Interpretation therefore is a recreation of meaning leading to a new experience, that of the receiver of the message. Here one can see from another point of view the simultaneous adequacy and inadequacy of symbol. It is adequate because one succeeds in recreating the experience in oneself, which is understanding. It is at the same time inadequate in two ways: the sender may not have given adequate expression to the experience as we have seen earlier; secondly the receiver's interpretation may not be adequate owing to various lacks: lack of knowledge of the medium (an unprepared person looking at a work of art), lack of presence to the situation (a person who is distracted and is not attentive to the inter-personal exchange taking place) and lack of capacity (the person is not fully capable of experiencing, either because one does not have the gift or because one's previous experiences do not predispose one for adequate response to the communication).

The life-situation or *context* in which the inter-personal exchange takes place becomes really crucial to the quality of the exchange. Shaking hands is a symbolic gesture. Looking at the photograph of two persons shaking hands in a newspaper or in a work of art is different from being actually involved in shaking hands. Shaking hands as a sign of fellowship and solidarity will mean different things according to whether one is welcoming, congratulating, sympathizing, encouraging etc. It is the interpersonal life-context that ultimately makes the communication come alive and determines its precise significance. For example it is one thing to take an oath on the

stage as part of a drama, but another to do the "same" thing in front of a judge in a court room.

Such inter-personal relations are possible through the communication of a *message* from one person to another. A message is the embodying of a meaning in a symbolic medium, expressed by the sender and interpreted by the receiver. What I would like to stress here is that because of the 'gap' between the experience and the expression on the one hand and of the 'gap' between the interpretation and the experience on the other, the message acquires an autonomy that is significant. Once the message is 'objectified' in a medium the sender has no control over it or over its interpretation, though one can always try to correct misunderstandings. But then it becomes a conversation — that is, a series of additional communications, no longer simply the first one. This autonomy of the message as *text* is particularly evident in a work of literature or of arts or in myth or ritual where communication as the reactualization of the message extends beyond limits of space and time. When I am reading a poem or an article or the Scriptures, the intention of the 'sender' is embodied in the text before me which I have to interpret. Even if the author is before me and attempts to explain the 'text', what I have is actually another text as commentary, which may throw light on the first, but which does not invalidate it or set it aside.

The last element in the event of communications is *code*. The message or meaning is expressed through a system of symbols. This could be a language or any other symbolic code of a culture. It is not my intention here to examine in detail the characteristics of different codes. I shall highlight only what I think is relevant to our purpose here. The codes belong to a community. Whatever may be the manner in which a particular code came into existence it continues to function as the code for a community in such a way that its members share it as a medium for inter-communication. To take the example

of a language, it is inherited by the group. We are born into a linguistic tradition. We learn a language that is already there as the means of communication in a social group. I may enrich it by my creative contribution, but I cannot change its basic structure. I have to learn it and use it according to its own rules and structures. And yet this language is not something 'natural' or 'innate', because we see such a variety of languages in the world. A language is an arbitrary creation of a social group. A social group agrees through an unwritten convention that such and such a sound or group of sounds refer to such and such a thing or reality. There is no compelling reason why a cow should be called a 'cow' in English, 'vache' in French, 'pasu' in Tamil. And yet a Tamil child does not know it except under the name 'pasu'. We need not go further into the systemic articulations of the basic sounds in any language. The word 'pasu' is a *sign* that refers to a particular member of the bovine species. It can become a *symbol* — not so much the word, but the reality signified by it — of fertility, abundance and riches in a pastoral society. The symbol is not arbitrary in the same way as the sign, because the cow becomes the symbol of abundance precisely because it gives milk, which is an essential element of the food system of a given culture so that a person's wealth was measured by the number of the cows that person had. In a religious context the cow even becomes a sacred animal in India. There is an element of creativity in the emergence of such symbols because a particular culture has chosen this rather than another symbol to symbolize abundance. But at the same time there is a foundation in reality in so far as, in a pastoral economy, the cow is a source of riches. They could not think in the same way of a horse or of an elephant. Some other symbols with deeper roots in nature may have a resonance across cultural boundaries. Thus for example water is a symbol of purification, destruction and new birth in many cultures. This commonality is certainly due to the central place water has in human life. The idea of a code supposes that the symbols are

not considered individually, but as part of a system, characteristic of a culture. Thus while water will always be somehow related to the 'Ganga' in the Indian tradition, in the Christian tradition it will somehow be linked to Baptism. Unlike a sign therefore, a symbol has its roots in nature and geographical and historical tradition, which are characteristic of a culture.

Culture: a network of symbol systems

We are born into a community. A community is not a herd. A herd is held together by instincts and needs. These are not absent in humans. But humans rise beyond this animal level and establish inter-personal relationships. These relationships are not given, but have to be constructed. Communication is precisely the means of constructing these relationships. This construction is not a simple process. Various elements are involved in it. A study of human societies by anthropologists and sociologists have shown at least three major elements in the process: kinship structures, myths expressive of worldviews and ritual action.

Kinship structures are organizational. A crowd becomes a community through being ordered into a whole by the specification of roles and functions, status and organizational structure. The family is the basic unit. In a family the father and mother have specific roles in a given society at a given time. Families are knit into groups. Marriage — giving and taking of brides — seem to be a common way of building relationships among families and social groups. Not only the bride and the groom, but their families, especially uncles, seem to have special roles in structuring community. At the macro level a similar differentiation of functions has given, for instance, the caste system in India. This is not only a system of social stratification, but also a way of political organization as exemplified by the Dharmasastras. All this organization takes the form of relationships and these are promoted through communication, exchange of gifts, affirmation of roles and status in community events like marriage or festival celebrations etc.

Any such organization of society must be guided by a principle which not only justifies the structure, but also provides a vision towards which current organization is always an approximation demanding constant progress. The *Myths* provide such a vision. They specify the identity of the group through reference to its origin and its end, which are often trans-historical in nature. People see themselves as descendants of divine beings or as called together by a special divine vocation or constituted by a special divine event. This special origin also contains a promise. Experience makes it clear that the community has lost its primordial identity through various kinds of wrong-doing. Therefore the primordial community has to be built up again, constantly, in every age. It is a process, not a once for all event. God is seen as involved in this process of community construction. These myths find expression in narratives that might remain oral or be written down as Scriptures. In this way myths offer a worldview and provide meaning with which to interpret the present in the light, both of the past and of the future. Myths are thus not pictures of life and reality as it is, but symbolic evocations of life and reality as they were and as they will be.

Rituals are communal symbolic actions that actually construct community in the light of the vision provided by the myths and of the structures laid down by tradition. They refer back to the tradition symbolically evoked by myth and actualize it in symbolic action on the occasion of social events that are important for the community: rites of passage for the individual, seasonal and other occasions when the community becomes aware of itself as community and seeks to celebrate its identity, realizing or actualizing it in that very process. Every festival is a social event involving common praying, exchange of gifts that establish or strengthen relationships, banquets, that celebrate and constitute community. All these are symbolic actions that not only evoke but realize community in various ways on different occasions.

In earlier ages this building up of community

through myth, ritual and organization was a global process, at once sacred and secular, valid both at micro and macro levels. But history and development inevitably bring in a process of differentiation between the social and the political, the cultural and the religious. This is the process of secularization. Political myths – a classless society – take their place by the side of religious ones. Secular rituals marginalise religious ones to the private sphere. Besides in a big country like India this differentiation is further helped by all sorts of pluralisms. So new political structures like democracy may be superimposed on what is still basically a feudal, hierarchical society. Castes become political power blocks. While religious myths gives rise to fundamentalisms, they are challenged by various secular ideologies. Nationalism and ideals of a welfare State replace visions of religious community. By the side of the religious rituals which no longer unite all Indians as one community, we have new national celebrations and rituals as well as political heroes.

All these three elements involved in the construction of community are symbol systems: complex of symbols that regulate the life of a social group. Together they constitute *culture*. They are the creations of a particular social group: that is why they differ from one group to another. Their creation may depend on economic, socio-political and even geographical conditions. But they are not determined by these. It is the freedom and creativity of the social group that guarantees their originality and at the same time the possibility of their impact on these conditions in order to change them. Language is a basic medium that underlies and supports these various symbol systems. Language by itself is a system of signs that is enriched by the symbols. On the other hand the symbols acquire clarity and specificity only through language. For example the symbolic actions of the ritual get their specific meaning not only by the life-situation, but also by the myth-narrative that accompanies it. Washing is a symbol common to most cultures. It is the word that accompanies the gesture that specifies whether it is

simple purification repeated many times as in Hinduism or a rite of initiation that is done only once (Baptism). But at the same time language cannot substitute for symbol, without cutting off the rite from life.

The only symbol system that we have not mentioned so far are Arts: literature, music, the plastic arts and dance. They can be part of the symbolic action in ritual. As a matter of fact all the arts had their origin in that manner. But differentiation through development, which we spoke of earlier, has given rise to forms of Art that are pure expressions of creativity and celebration. They are not without significance for the experience and construction of community. But they do not have by themselves the same structural role in society that myth and rite have. For instance, it is one thing to have a beautiful dramatic representation of the passion of Jesus. It is another to participate in it ritually through the Eucharist.

The rituals of worship

Growing cultural differentiation has set apart the religious rituals or worship from other social and political ones. In keeping with our approach above we can characterise them as *symbolic actions that construct and maintain religious community*. Religion itself can be briefly described as everything that has to do with the Ultimate in life, not merely as transcendent, but even much more as immanent. It is important to realise the significance of this. The religious community is not something that is separate from the human community. It is one aspect or dimension of the human community, distinguished from other dimensions, but not divided. Before and after the differentiation it keeps its prophetic role of challenging the present and proposing the ideal community of the future, at the same time protecting it from the abuses of a too exclusive economic or political vision. That is why the religious vision is not an alienating dream. It is an authentic reading of life, but a reading that calls for transformation and facilitates it through the symbolic action of the religious ritual.

Arising out of the life of the community the religious ritual is bound to 'embody' the existing, imperfect or even unjust, socio-economic, political and cultural structures that characterise the situation of the community. The ritual assembly reflects the existing power relationships within the community: the rich may get special treatment, the clergy may dominate the laity and the existing vested interests may seek legitimation from the religious ritual. But the ritual itself embodies a prophetic force. It challenges the situation in terms of a memory and a hope. The memory is made present by the basic symbolic action of the ritual itself helped by the accompanying narrative and this very symbolic action presents an ideal that we have to strive after; we see this, for example, in the Eucharist. Even an assembly that is made to occupy separate places according to caste divisions shares the same bread at the same table. If the symbolism of this gesture does not challenge the group, it is because for them the ritual has become an empty gesture and is no longer really a symbolic action. Even deeper symbolic meanings regarding self-giving and sacrifice are sure to escape it. But there can be a symbolic action only on condition that there is a real effort towards creating the equality of the children of God in the group through mutual self-gift, even if this ideal will be realized only slowly.

This important contribution of ritual to the construction of the religious dimension of the human community could be rendered symbolically ineffective in two ways. Rather than preserve the tension between life and symbolic action — between 'structure' and 'anti-structure' — one could emphasize onesidely one or the other. One could see the ritual as a fixed, heavenly, sacred action that one has only to repeat faithfully almost like magic. It will then be simply alienating. Or one could see the ritual as any symbolic action of community building, ignoring the dimension of memory and hope. It will then become merely secular. One of the reasons for such reductionist approaches may be a misunderstanding of the psychological aspect of ritual.

The psychological aspect

The basic psychological needs of the human person seem to be a sense of security and freedom from the feeling of guilt. Security depends on affirmation of self and acceptance by the other. Security may be threatened both by the other seen as violating one's identity and liberty and by death as the ultimate threat to life, often foreshadowed by sickness. Threats to security cause anxiety. People who are anxious seek reassurance, whether rational or irrational. Religious ritual does offer a reassurance with regard to the anxiety connected with death. It does so in terms of the 'memory' and the 'hope' that are relived by the rite. But an anxious person, rather than consciously relive this, can cling to it almost in an irrational manner, looking for the magical powers of the rite. Such a person would rather prefer a hieratic, alienating ritual rather than one that is actual and relevant to ongoing life and its problems.

The second of the psychological needs we spoke of has to do with feelings of guilt. The guilty person too needs a reassurance that one is okay. One is afraid of freedom. One is not able to handle the conflict between the 'good' and the 'evil' in oneself and in society. Such a person too would seek to run away from reality. Ritual could provide one with such a possibility: in its hieratic form it takes one's mind off from day to day problems; in its secular form the problem is denied and forgotten because one refuses the ultimate perspective and in doing so one reduces 'guilt' to a mere lack (imperfection) or inadequacy.

In both these cases, whether of insecurity or of guilt, it would be more helpful, both to the individuals and the community, if one could live the problems and the emotions connected with them through the symbolic action of the liturgy in the context of the Ultimate, as present in the 'here' and 'now', experienced in the context of memory and hope. This would help healing, integration and growth. Marginalisation of emotions, either individual

or collective, may be dictated by a particular culture. One cannot wish those emotions away. One of the reasons for the multiplication of religious movements and cults may precisely be that they make place for emotions. They may do it in an unbalanced manner. But they may have been driven to it by the 'puritanic', abstract and formal character of contemporary liturgy. In a liturgy which has no place for emotions the symbols have become mere signs: they mediate a disembodied meaning; they do not communicate and celebrate life.

Structures of symbolic action

If we look at ritual, not as a collection of disparate symbols, but as an organic whole then we see that it is a symbolic action. The meaning of Baptism has to be interpreted by looking at it as a rite of initiation of a new member into the community of believers and not simply on the basis of the symbolism of water. The Eucharist is not simply consecrated bread and wine: it is a meal of a community taken in memory, faith and hope. The *Upanayana* is not simply the whispering of a mantra into the ears of the boy entering into adulthood: it is the welcoming of a boy into the company of adults. One could multiply examples. A ritual is basically a symbolic action in community: it should be interpreted as such. It is within that structure that we should look at the meaning of particular symbols that might give a special colour or significance to the action.

Looking at any religious ritual as a symbolic action one can distinguish in it three levels of symbolic structure and meaning. At a level that is accessible to the senses, we have a complex of symbols: words, actions, gestures, images, music and dance, and persons both as individuals and as community. Looking at the Christian rite of initiation one sees, apart from illustrative symbols like the white dress, the light, crosses etc., three interconnected symbolic actions: the profession of faith, the washing with water, the giving of the Spirit either through imposition of hands and/or anointing. Besides the declarative or per-

formative formula of Baptism, there are prayers and prefaces that verbalise the meaning of the symbolic actions. They are not a commentary on the actions, but integral parts of them, giving them a particular meaning.

All these elements coalesce into one single symbolic action which is the integration of a new member into the community of believers in Jesus Christ. This is the *social level*. The whole complex of symbols becomes a single symbol of a community event. It is the community that makes the ritual come alive. By reliving the ritual with all its elements the community confers a new status — full membership — on the individual neophyte, gives the individual an experiential transformation that could be called a new birth, and lives once again its own identity as the community of believers.

Living one's identity as a community of believers is precisely the awareness in faith of being the new people of God, dying and rising into new life with Christ, reborn in the Spirit as the children of the Father. This is the *religious level*. These three levels are mutually interpenetrating dimensions of one symbolic action.

Life and Ritual

Ritual has no real significance apart from life. But ritual is for life; life is not for ritual. Keeping in mind this connection with life one can identify three types of ritual according to the life-situation in which ritual makes present the ultimate dimension. I would call them Rites of passage, of involvement and of transcendence.

Rites of passage mark the stages through which each one of us passes through as we grow and mature in life and as we get more and more integrated into the community. The rite of initiation, for example, is a rite of passage. These rites focus on the individual, though in the context of the community. They solemnise, so to speak, the important moments of transition from one status to another. They remind every one that such transitions are not only significant socially, but also religiously,

in so far as they are seen as changes of roles and functions in a community, whose basic identity is religious. Because of this they concern more the structure of the community rather than the community as such. This means that a given rite of passage may have certain consequences for the community structure irrespective of the benefit drawn from it by the individual. In the Christian tradition, this is the difference between 'validity' and 'fruitfulness'. When one is baptised one becomes, and is henceforward recognized by every one as a member of the community with all the rights and duties that this implies. But because of a lack of proper spiritual disposition that person may not have been reborn in the Spirit. In our three level scheme, while the symbol has been effective at the second, social level, it has not been effective at the third, spiritual level. The symbols in the ritual, particularly the words, have a performative character: they do what they say. Baptism, Confirmation and Orders are rites of passage in our tradition. Most of the *Samskaras* in the Hindu tradition are rites of passage. They not only have social consequences, but they also have an impact on the person's growth into Brahmanhood. The priority in these rites are to community structure, but the community in question is a religious community.

The *rites of involvement* respond to the various needs of the person and of the community. Many practices of popular devotion like novenas, prayers for rain and harvest, rituals of healing etc. are rites of involvement. The focus is on life in this world, with all its needs and problems, not only personal but also social. However these needs and problems are not seen in themselves, but as meaningful only in relation to an Ultimate in life, whether this Ultimate is seen in terms of a better life, of a world of Spirits, or of God. There is therefore a lively sense of dependence. The feelings of sorrow and separation, of loss and need, of joy and thanksgiving, of togetherness and division, of love and hate are all taken into account. In many traditional societies the Shamans are specialists in integral therapy that operates at the same time physi-

cally, psychologically, socially and spiritually. In more developed societies this unity has broken down. But a good hospital may still have, besides the medical doctor, a social assistant, a psychotherapist or counselor and a chaplain to cater to these various dimensions of human need. The anointing of the sick is the only one, among the seven sacraments, that could be called a rite of involvement. But we have many sacramentals, blessings, devotions and other popular practices that are really rites of involvement. They focus on life in this world. Unless we wish to make religion otherworldly and irrelevant, it would be a mistake to ignore these rites in the religious life of the community. Community life, especially in its psychological aspects, is strongly present here — as different from the socio-structural aspect that was more predominant in the rites of passage. The symbols here are more expressive, more loaded psychologically through mechanisms like projection and are also more easily manipulated.

The *rites of transcendence* are more immediately prophetic, and therefore more properly religious, more directly related to the Ultimate. The focus is on community life as such: on love and service, on togetherness and mutuality. We attempt to build community, not in the structural sense, but as a network of relationships. This is the new people of God — the new heaven and the new earth. But it needs continuing effort. We also have to transcend day to day existence, without running away from it, but at the same time transforming it. This transformation is done in terms of a saving event which is made present and active here and now in memory and hope. It is, in a full sense, symbolic action. More than the rites of passage or of involvement, they refer to a primordial saving event that is re-enacted with reference to contemporary life. The primordial saving event specifies and determines the symbols that are used to evoke and relive that event in memory. The Eucharist in our tradition and the sacrificial rituals in other religious traditions are symbols of transcendence. Pilgrimages too, in so far as they focus on a place of divine manifestation and liberating action and are lived

as processes of personal and community transformation, may be said to be rituals of transcendence. Symbolically speaking, the priority here is to the third, spiritual level. It would be of course ineffective if it is cut off from the other two levels. On the other hand, if there is no transcendence, the rituals become merely empty and formalistic.

After this brief description of the three types of rituals it will be clear that, though all are symbolic actions, they are not symbolic in the same way, both in relation to life that they symbolize and in relation to the mystery that they make symbolically actual. Any interpretation will have to take these differences into account.

Plurality in unity

To live in a world of symbols is to live in a pluralistic world. In the field of religious symbols one can point to three sources which give rise to pluralism. The first source of pluralism is the *natural and geographical conditions* in which people live. The mountains and the rivers, the seasons and the flowers, the animals and the trees are specific sources of symbolism. One has only to remember the significance of the Himalayas, the Ganges, the Spring, the Lotus, the Cow etc. in the Indian tradition. Similarly Jerusalem, the Jordan, the Lamb etc. are significant in the Biblical tradition.

Culture is the second source of pluralism. Culture consists of the symbolic worlds that a people have constructed for themselves. It is the result of their creative imagination. Though their imagination works on the available natural elements there is also an element of creation and specification. This diversity is most evident in language, but also in other symbol systems. One has only to read poetry and try to translate it into another language to realise the truth of this. Culture as an ongoing, creative process, though rooted in tradition, is a source of change and newness. Symbols have, in this manner, a history. The Ganges and the Jordan are both rivers; but they do not have the same significance in the Hindu and

Christian traditions, — even though Jesus was baptized in the Jordan.

Every religion believes in a revelation. *Revelation* is not just verbal. God's self-manifestations take place in particular places and times and to particular peoples. This gives rise to sacred places, times and symbols. The Exodus, the Cross, the Bread and the Wine etc. are such symbols. Similarly India is full of sacred spots that commemorate some divine manifestation and thus become places of pilgrimage. Even Islam, in spite of the primacy of the word of the Koran, encourages pilgrimage to Mecca — not to speak of shrines of Saints in the Sufi tradition.

These three sources of symbols mutually involve each other. A divine manifestation in so far as it does not take place in the abstract but in a natural, socio-cultural and historical context, finds expression in symbols drawn from those three contexts. In this way culture, while creative, uses nature; revelation, while original, uses both nature and culture.

The plurality of the symbols, however, is not absolute. Language, as a system of signs, is something unique to itself. One can translate from one language to another. Otherwise the languages are different from each other. Of course, we are not talking here of sister languages that have developed from the same root. Being arbitrary systems of signs they can be absolutely diverse, even if some of the basic structures may be similar thanks to the similar structure of the brain, the similarity of human experience, the similar functioning of the imagination etc. Symbols that are not totally arbitrary, but have their roots in nature or experience, have a commonality about them. For example, sharing of food symbolizes community. Water symbolizes purification. These basic meanings may be set in a wide variety of contexts and acquire a wide variety of further meanings. But the basic meaning continues as a foundation and therefore as a common element. Similarly, human life and experiences and God the revealer being the same, the symbols that these give rise to also have a commonality about them. Such commonality is the

foundation for a unity that underlies diversity. It is a unity which is not perceived apart from but in and through the diversity. Therefore it appears organic and effectively symbolizes the unity of humanity before God in all its rich diversity.

Plurality of symbol also argues for its relativity. Every symbol is relative to the reality of which it is the symbol. It is never an adequate representation. A real, authentic, even unique representation, may still remain an inadequate representation. This is especially so when the reality that is symbolized is an infinite and transcendent mystery, before which all one can say is *neti, neti*. Having said this, however, we continue to multiply symbols for the mystery. They become complementary. They do not say the same thing, but they underline different aspects of the same reality. That is why they are not relativistic, but complete each other. This is a second kind of unity, which is not at the beginning, but at the end.

Conclusion

To affirm that the human person is a symbolic animal is to affirm that the human person is free. If we have created the symbolic worlds in which we live we can change them too. As the worlds we have created become a tradition within which we stand, the change will not be revolutionary and rootless, but evolutionary and progressive. We can discuss about how, how much, how far, what we can change. But change we must if we have to live and to grow. Growth is precisely the challenge that religions throw to us and the rituals, especially the religious ones, embody. I remember Newman's famous phrase: 'To live is to change and to have lived long is to have changed often.' The principle of dynamism is not the world of things (economics), nor of power (politics), nor even the rationality of science, but a vision that is at once an inspiration and a goal. But the principle and guarantee of unity as well as of continuity is precisely the living community that celebrates its life.

Theology of Liturgy: Liturgical Tradition and Traditions

Many people feel that II Vatican Council has brought about a crisis. In a Church that ran smoothly and safely for centuries, worship-forms and dogmatic formulations were subjected to a critique which created doubts with regard to carefully proved doctrines, confusion in the neatly regulated liturgical actions and disorder in the orderly and highly efficient government. Those who clung to the old order were called 'traditionalists' and those who wanted a new set-up were catalogued 'progressives', thus giving the impression that tradition and progress are mutually exclusive. In this way, the crisis of Vatican II resulted in polarisation. While crisis is a healthy sign of growth, polarisation and stagnation indicate the unhealthy state of the organism. Crisis is a sign of the presence of the Spirit, but stagnation and polarisation indicate the action of the human spirit led by its own momentum without reference to the Holy Spirit who dwells within.

The truth and importance of the above becomes clear when we reflect on the meaning and role of 'tradition'. From a merely etymological point of view it means 'something handed-down' or it can also mean 'the act of handing over'. Therefore, it is wrong to identify tradition as something merely of the past or stagnant. Tradition is not the simple permanence of a structure. 'What is passed on is received by a living active subject. There exists a subject who receives and this subject is in turn active in receiving it. Thus tradition will not be merely a transmission followed by a passive, mechanical recep-

tion'¹. Since those who receive it are living subjects, they in their turn keep it alive and actively transmit it. There is a continual renewal and fertility within the given structure without in any way sacrificing the basic identity. What happens to this identity is that it continues to be kept alive and relevant. Hence we may say: fidelity to tradition can never be reduced to a simple repetition of what has been handed down. The tradition process itself demands a continual actualisation, a bringing of the past into the present, in contemporary understanding and in forms relevant to the present, remaining all the while open to the future.

1. Christian tradition

Religious tradition may be described as the handing down (or what is handed down) of a religious experience. It has its root in the encounter between God and man in the past. This experience is communicated faithfully to all the succeeding generations. In this sense it may be said that tradition is the living continuity of faith quickening a community of believers. 'Tradition is the history in and by which the people of God lives'². This is true of the Jewish religion which we may say was entirely based on tradition, nay more, the very religious authenticity was proved by showing the link with the past. The God of Israel was not a God whom they discovered through research and reflection, but He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, 'the God of our Fathers'. In Christianity, too, religiousness is resting on tradition. What was directly revealed by God is handed down by tradition. For only revelation understood as what our fathers, the apostles, saw and experienced can be the foundation of our faith, not philosophical speculation (1 Cor 15). 'The faith, the way Christians live, pray and celebrate their services, the whole Church itself, are conceived of as the propagation of a unique reality stemming from the apostles and from Pentecost'³. We can distinguish the following elements in Christian

(1) Yves M.J. Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, London (1986), 253

(2) F.F. Bruce, *Tradition old and new*, Paternoster Press (1970), 171.

(3) Yves M.J. Congar, *op. cit.*, 24.

tradition: (a) It is of *divine origin* (1 These 2:13); (b) It is the *personal* experience of the one who transmits (1 Cor 15:3-8); (c) It is *dynamic*, spiritual, i. e., mediated through the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:12); (d) It is *incarnational*, i.e., handed down through human instruments and embodied in human institutions (1 Cor 11:23).

One of the primary functions of religious tradition is to provide direction in times of change or crisis in the lives of individuals and groups. A sense of tradition, allowing for the old to be appreciated as ever new and the new to be received as clarifying or fulfilling the old, provides direction to individuals and groups at such times. Therefore, the return to the sources at times of renewal should not be understood as a restoration of the past. The past has passed and cannot exist in the present except as a carrier of the living tradition which has to find a new expression relevant for today. The return to the sources is but one moment in the renewal; to stop there would be to condemn oneself to a kind of archeological irrelevance. Christian tradition has another very important characteristic that can serve as a mark of authenticity and validity. It requires a relationship to the future, to eschatology. This is clearly expressed in the very prayer formulas of the early Church 'Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus' and also in today's Eucharistic acclamation: 'Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again' as well as in the Pauline expression of the Eucharistic tradition: 'This is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you... Until the Lord comes, therefore, everytime you eat this bread and drink this cup you are proclaiming his death' (1 Cor 11:23-25).

The content of this Christian tradition is the whole of Christian experience expressed in a variety of forms. The core of this tradition was the experience of the risen Lord. In effect it is identified with the witness of the Spirit. This is very much evident in the way the Eastern Church formulated the Christian tradition. Whether it is in worship or in theological formulations or in ecclesiastical structures,

it is the Holy Spirit that keeps the tradition alive in the Church. The authenticity of the carriers of the tradition is proved by testing whether they speak in the Spirit or not. Also in the West this is the case; however, here the veracity of the faith formulas and sacramental celebrations was established by having recourse to intellectual proofs as well. This was due to the particular method that was followed in transmitting the tradition in the West and not to any denial of the role of the Spirit in this all-important area of the mission of the Church.

2. Liturgical tradition

Liturgy is tradition inasmuch as it is a means to communicate an original experience, making it ever fresh. In our Christian understanding, liturgy is also a proclamation of faith (SC 33-36). It brings the faith formulas of the past to us. A genuine liturgical tradition is able to assume the form of a present reality. Therefore liturgical tradition should not be identified with liturgical forms of the past. The proclamatory character of the liturgy makes the faith element that is transmitted become alive and relevant. When we insist on its ritual character, there is too much of a danger of reducing it to a dead monument, a kind of pantheon to be visited as one visits a museum. We must combine harmoniously both the proclamatory and the ritual character so that it becomes a proclamation in rite. While as ritualised activity, the liturgy has a momentous power of conservation, as proclamation it becomes a great source of spiritual energy for the community that takes part in it.

A special characteristic of liturgical tradition is that it can evoke a response to the original revelation. It is not a mere rendering present of the divine action for the sake of worship; but a reminder, a memorial, an anamnesis, effected by the Spirit of Jesus as promised by Him so that the community may give an adequate response to the revealing God. Thus we may not only speak of liturgical tradition, but of liturgy as tradition. We can only come to an adequate understanding of Christian worship if we look at it from this perspective.

3. Liturgy as tradition

Christian worship is the ritual re-enactment or representation of the saving action of God in Jesus Christ. The original historical event has to become present to all the subsequent generations. It is not possible to repeat the historical event. The only way it can be transmitted is through the medium of the experience of those who came into contact with the original event. The competence and reliability of the first witnesses rest not on their intellectual ability to interpret the teachings of the founder, but on the fact that they had personal experience of all that constitute the foundational experience. In the case of Christianity, it is the experience of the risen Lord. They communicate this experience to their followers in many ways: through their life, miracles, teaching, worship forms and even their death. Liturgy, therefore, is tradition because it transmits the foundational experience of the disciples of the Lord through cultic symbols. This is clearly evident not only with regard to the revelation in the New Testament, but also in the Old Testament.

The celebration of the most important feast, the Pasch, was a ritual re-telling of the Exodus event. Those who were present at that celebration were to consider themselves as actual participants in the original event⁴. The analysis of some of the prayer formularies gives evidence to this anamnetic character of the Jewish liturgy. The psalter is the history of salvation experientially narrated by the people of God. They see the same God continuing to act in their lives as he did in the lives of the Fathers. All this shows the dynamic character of revelation. But unfortunately, it was adversely affected when ritualisation and interpretation distorted the original experience and meaning. Thus we can say that 'tradition' was distorted by 'traditions'. In fact Jesus had to rebuke the religious leaders of his time who were supposed to be the transmitters of tradition saying: "You make God's Word null and void for the sake of your tradition which you have handed down" (Mark 7:13).

(4) Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* London, 1966, 492-93.

The early Christian Church understood worship as that act by which the death and resurrection of Christ, the core of Christian revelation, was made present and experienced by the community. For them 'sacrifice' was Christ offering himself for the remission of our sins (Eph 5:2; Hebr 9:14; 10:11-12). The Christian sacrifice consisted in the Christians joining with Christ in his offering to the Father. They offered no other victims; they had no other altar and no other temple than the Body of Christ and themselves united with Him. Because of this the non-Christians accused them of 'atheism' and 'irreligiosity'; they had no sacrifice and temple and altar as understood by the others. The Lord's Supper which they celebrated was the ritual expression of this new sacrifice; it consisted of signs of self-gift expressed in the sharing of a meal that signified the self-gift of Christ on the Cross. Thus we see that the worship of the early Church was the proclamation, re-enactment of the core of Christian revelation. It was reattribution, a handing down to succeeding generations the experience of the Christ-event. In fact the Christians were known by others through their lives which reproduced this two-fold original experience in their behaviour: their gathering for Eucharistic celebration and their life of charity; both expressed the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, the core element of Christian tradition (Acts 2:42-47).

In fact this was seen as a characteristic of the Christians even by the Gentiles. Pliny, the Younger, in his letter to Trajan, gives the following picture of the Christians: "They met on a stated day before it was light, and addressed a form of prayer to Christ, as to a divinity, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purpose of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to eat in common a harmless meal⁵." The Eucharistic Prayer,

(5) Letters XC VII, C.W. Eliot, ed., *Letters and Treatises of Cicero*

above all, was a profession of faith. That is why there was no Creed, in the very early celebration of the Eucharist. While the faith formula of the Creed preserved the tradition in intellectual categories, the Eucharistic Prayer expressed it in vivid descriptive terms by recalling the original historical events to the minds of the faithful, inviting them not merely to an intellectual assent, but far more to an existential involvement. When we examine the very early liturgies, we find that all of them have a common basic structure which goes back to the Jewish synagogue and meal liturgies⁶. Their content, too, was basically the same: thanksgiving for the redemptive revelation of God in Christ⁷.

At this juncture, it is important to emphasise one point: even though the original experience was the same, it had a multiplicity of expressions⁸. This is a clear indication of the richness and vitality of that original experience and practice of what we now call tradition. Liturgical tradition not only transmitted the apostolic experience, but also unfolded its richness in a variety of ways. Liturgy, in other words, kept the tradition alive. But as time went on, there was an unfortunate deformation in the understanding of the variety of liturgical expressions of the same mystery. Too much emphasis was laid on particular cultural expressions which resulted in the absolutisation of some of the rituals. Thus what was meant to be the means for the better expression of the reality, namely, the one faith and the one tradition, became the cause of disunity, division and oppression. This is the issue we shall consider now: tradition and traditions.

4. Tradition and traditions

The original divine revelation is communicated to the community through human instruments. These are not

and Pliny, Harvard Classics, tr. Wm. Melmoth, rev. by F.T.C. Bosanquet (New York: P.F. Collier & Son Corp., 1937, 406.

(6) Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London, 1964, 36ff.

(7) Dom Gregory Dix, *op. cit.*, 216.

(8) Dom Gregory Dix, *op. cit.*, 156ff.

mere mechanical repeaters of the Word of God. They interpret it using all the human resources at their disposal. As a consequence we have many expressions of the same tradition. These expressions are 'traditions', while the original experience is 'tradition'.

We find that in the Old Testament so many traditions were considered important that at times the real content which they were to transmit and communicate was obscured. This is the result of an intellectual activity, whether it be theologizing or legalising, conducted without at the same time listening to the living God who speaks and the pilgrim people He speaks to. That is why Jesus had to condemn the official interpretations of revelation, given at his time.

The New Testament revelation takes place by eliminating these interpretations and fulfilling the original Covenant which God made with man. But even here, due to the defective functioning of the human instruments, the traditions acquire prominence even to the extent of disregarding the implications and value systems contained in the original revelation. By way of illustration I could cite the following: In the Church today we have many rites. These are the expressions by which the richness of the Mystery of Christ is unfolded fostering a greater and deeper communion among all the Churches. Unfortunately at times it leads just to the opposite. In the name of being faithful to one's ecclesial and ritual traditions, one absents oneself from a common celebration in which people of different rites take part. For instance, a Syro-Malabar priest, participating in a funeral celebration refuses to concelebrate the Eucharist because the celebration happens to be in Roman rite. Here we have a clear case of the appeal to tradition condemned by Jesus in the Gospel: 'You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition!' (Mk 7:8). The participation in a funeral Eucharistic celebration is an expression of our deep Christian solidarity. The Eucharist is the sign and sacrament of this solidarity. The refusal to join the concelebration at such an occasion amounts to

a refusal to express one's *Christian solidarity* in order to affirm one's *isolating identity*. Here we see how traditions can distort tradition and make ineffective the life tradition has to give and the power to build up the Kingdom of God.

Developing one's particular way of expressing the mystery is very important and necessary; but this should not create in us a narrow-minded exclusivism which can border on fanaticism. Such fanaticism destroys religion. Religious traditions will have to continue to change if they are to serve as authentic channels for communicating the tradition. 'Traditions' that have come from the past and from other regions can serve a particular time and place only inasmuch as they communicate the 'tradition'; but they cannot be restored and re-established as such because mere restoration and re-establishing often fail to make the 'tradition' truly living and relevant to the community called to experience the original revelation. If restoration of traditions has any meaning and purpose, it can only come from the fact that these actually bring to the present the content that they contain; but this will often mean new forms to express the original tradition. Therefore, a clear distinction between 'tradition' and 'traditions' is indispensable, especially in a period of radical changes like the one that we are living in. Lack of clarity in this matter can defeat the very purpose of change even as it is being implemented in the name of fidelity and relevance.

Applying what we have said above to liturgy we can say that the liturgical traditions which form a very important part of what we commonly call 'rites' have a significant role in unfolding the riches of the Mystery of Christ. They should be carefully preserved, their contents should be made known to the people, the hierarchy's role as interpreter of the riches of revelation in the community properly evaluated and appreciated. In any change that takes place in the field of Christian worship traditions and rites should be seriously considered. Therefore, we cannot start our liturgical renewal by making a leap into the past towards the apostolic period neglecting

all that history and faith of so many generations have legitimately accumulated for the benefit of our community and the universal Church. This Church is a historical reality and hence continuity with the past is absolutely necessary. But this link with the past and its rituals should not be expressed in the present by restoring the forms of old and repeating them for today's people. What should be done by each rite is to discover the particular theology of worship that it has developed in the course of centuries, and express them in a new way. Hence there should be only the restoration of the content and not of the forms.

Hence, even if a particular rite is full of meaning, but needs a very elaborate explanation to interpret the symbol, such a rite should be replaced with another symbol that has been taken from the life and culture of the people and is capable of conveying the rich content. In this process, not only will the acquisitions of the past be made available to the present, but a further unfolding of the same content will take place because every symbol has its own original way of communicating a reality. Thus the tradition will be maintained, it will even be carried forward in a vital enriching development to the future generations.

One of the arguments for maintaining a particular style of action, even in the liturgy, is its apostolic origin. 'Apostolic tradition' should not be identified merely with the style or external form of action. What makes the apostolic tradition valuable and normative is the personal experience the apostle had with original event of revelation. The true meaning of tradition (what is handed down) is this experience. In his turn the apostle expressed it taking into account the particular cultural context of his ministry. The cultural element of the apostolic ministry does not become, by itself, apostolic tradition; to illustrate it with an example: the way St. Peter celebrated the Eucharist does not, by itself, become normative for the Church of Rome today; what the Church of Rome has to be careful to maintain is the experience of the risen Christ

which the community of Rome, presided over by Peter, transmitted to the succeeding generations. The ritual elements that he used can be studied, interpreted and the symbolic system explained to the future generations in order that they may have the same experience of Peter and his community within their culture and life-situations, when they use their own appropriate rituals and symbol systems. If the apostolic tradition in its externals is restored to the present, the danger that the real tradition, the apostolic experience of the Christ-event, may not become the experience of today's community, is not imaginary.

Jesus Christ is alive today in the midst of the community. He is the real *traditio* of the Father. The human traditions have only one role to play: to sacramentalise it for the people. In doing this the use of relevant symbols is very necessary. Since these are the symbols of human relationship and involvement in human life, they will constantly change. No ritual restoration can, therefore, be justified if one is to be faithful to genuine tradition.

5. Relation between liturgical tradition and liturgical inculturation

If the role of the 'traditions' is only to convey the 'tradition' to future generations, it is necessary to see how such transmission actually takes place. The 'traditions' contain two elements: what is handed down and the manner in which it is handed down. The latter reflects the culture of the people who tried to express the original experience in their life and history; they used their symbolic structures. We may say, they inculturated the 'tradition'. This enabled them to deepen the experience, assimilate it into their lives and respond to it in such a way that they became an authentic community of deep-rooted faith. The ancient rites of the Church bear witness to this cultural assimilation of the one mystery of salvation. This process had to continue all through history. Evangelisation is the communication of the experience of salvation through proclamation. Even though it may often have to begin with the traditions or cultural expressions of faith

of the evangeliser, it is necessary to translate them as soon as possible into the cultural categories of those evangelised. Only then they become authentic communities of faith.

Jesus Christ did not entrust to his apostles any symbolic system that belongs to a particular culture. He only gave them the experience of His death and resurrection. What they and their successors had to do was to enter into the historical and cultural situation of those to whom they were sent, incarnate the message into their categories of thought and thus create a community of faith rooted in the cultural soil of their region. They had to develop traditions or cultural expressions by which the tradition or faith would be kept alive and eventually reach maturity. This happened in the early Church. That is why we have today Syrian, Alexandrian, Roman and Byzantine traditions: they are the result of the seed of the Word of God that was sown into the soil of their region. This seed grew into a mighty tree. Its fruits were shared in ecclesial communion. Thus, inculturation became a very important means for maintaining and developing the tradition.

6. The liturgical traditions of India and efforts towards authentic Indian Liturgies

India has been privileged to have a Christianity that has come down to her through three venerable ecclesiastical traditions: the Antiochian, the Chaldean and the Roman. Although their names: Syro-Malankara and Syro-Malabar seem to indicate cultural interaction with the people of this country, there is practically nothing Indian in them beyond the name. In all honesty we have to say that there have been no *Indian liturgical traditions*, but only some *liturgical traditions in India*. In the light of what we have said above, if the 'tradition', the original experience, has to become truly vital in this country, it is necessary that the foreign liturgical traditions that have come into India should begin a process of authentic inculturation. This does not in any way mean abandoning of the authentic tradition (what

was handed down) or that the theological and spiritual riches of these rites should be sacrificed. The only thing that needs to be done is a gradual inculturation of this great inheritance. This would mean the following process: let all the existing rites of India, instead of spending their energy on restoring ritual elements that have no relevance in today's India — as ritual elements they may have relevance in what they signify — pool all their energies and resources to bring about a gradual inculturation of the riches which they contain.

Conclusion

Perhaps never before in its history has the Indian Church reflected so boldly on its identity as today. It is inevitable that such a reflection brings about a crisis in the life of the Church. While tension is healthy, polarisation is unhealthy. There is no doubt that the Spirit is present in every authentic crisis in the Church. Before trying to solve the crisis all of us should open ourselves to the Spirit. If we try to solve the problem without this openness we run the risk that we arrive at an unhealthy compromise or a disastrous disruption. The Spirit is asking the Church in India to become more deeply conscious of its ecclesial identity within the Indian context. This is the beginning of an *Indian ecclesial tradition* while what we had so far were *ecclesiastical traditions in India*. We cannot build up an Indian ecclesial tradition unless we deeply root ourselves in our Indian culture remaining fully united with the risen Lord. When this happens we will attain credibility both here in India in the eyes of those professing other faiths, and in the universal Church because we will be present in that communion with our own specific identity. The great 'tradition' will then have an Indian expression, unique in its manifestation, universal in content: the Indian Christian tradition.

The Liturgical Rites in India: their Origin and Historical Development

There are three liturgical Rites, representing the three individual Churches in India: Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin. In this article we try to look into the origin and development of these rites in India. In this attempt it is helpful to have a clear notion of 'Rite'.

1. Rite in general

The concept of Rite

The word 'Rite' has various meanings in ecclesiastical writings. It is sometimes used to signify a determinate mode of performing a sacred function. In a broader sense, it is used to signify the whole of liturgical laws, customs and mode of worship proper to an ecclesial community. In the canonical sense, a rite is a group of the faithful who are governed by laws and customs of their own, based on ancient traditions not only in regard to liturgical matters, but also in respect to the canonical order, and acknowledged by the Holy See as autonomous and distinct from other groups¹. Accordingly, 'Rite' denotes an individual Church with its liturgy and tradition. It is in this sense that we speak of the different rites in India.

'Rite' as the expression of the reality of the Church

The meaning of the 'Rite' goes deeper and beyond the juridical framework. It has its theological significance.

Church is not a supra ritual entity in the sense that the Church comes first and the rites are only periferal to the reality of the Church. The Church lives by the manifestation of her faith through worship. Liturgy is the expression of the life of the Church. Only when a commu-

1. E. Herman, 'De conceptu 'Ritus'' *The Jurist* 12 (1942) pp.338-339.

nity is gathered together in the Spirit and holds on to the faith handed over to them through the unbroken apostolic traditions, can it be called an ecclesial community. Every ecclesial community has to express and manifest the mystery of Christ through their worship. However the mystery of Christ can never be totally expressed or experienced by a single group nor a single tradition.

Origin of different Rites

Jerusalem is the mother of all Churches and liturgies. It was from there that the apostles went out to different parts of the world to preach the Gospel. They did not take with them any fixed form of worship but only the Christ-experience to share with others. In the world into which the apostles carried the glad tidings there were many languages and customs. Only gradually the expression of faith through worship got definite shape forming different rites or forms of worship. Of course, in all the apostolic Churches as well as in the daughter Churches there must have existed some kind of fluid liturgies during the first centuries. But it was only by the end of the fourth century that the definite liturgical rites and families were formed. So one cannot speak about the liturgy of the apostles but only about the apostolic traditions handed down to a particular community.

When liturgies began to take definite shapes, the solidification of liturgy was not determined merely by cultural considerations nor confined within national limits. Origin of these rites was primarily based on apostolic origin, ecclesial witnessing and spiritual tradition. Cultural and linguistic differences might have influenced them. Indeed after the solidification rites and liturgies became the patrimony of certain national or ethnical groups and confined within certain political boundaries. Some flourished under imperial patronage as in the case of Roman and Byzantine rites.

Constituent elements of a Rite

There are four distinct factors which determine the identity of an individual Church or Rite. Sacred Liturgy is the most important among them. The different liturgies

of the Church are the manifold expression of her faith, handed down to posterity through tradition. Since all these liturgies have at their centre the same Christ-event and are based on apostolic and patristic teachings they are all equally valid sources of Christian faith².

Spirituality constitutes the second factor in the identity of a Rite, and it is related to its liturgy. There is no spirituality in the Church that is not liturgical or somehow related to liturgy. Christian spirituality is to live according to one's faith and worship. Another factor, through which the life of an Individual Church is expressed is its theology. Every Individual Church can have its own theological thinking closely related to its liturgy and spirituality. We have heard the famous dictum *Lex orandi lex credendi*. Theology, properly speaking, is an attempt to understand the faith expressed in the liturgy. A fourth essential requisite of an Individual Church is its own administrative system or Canon law. Every Individual Church should have a certain amount of autonomy and its juridical system.

By the above factors each Individual Church becomes unique and *sui generis*. It should have something unique to contribute or share with others under all these aspects. So one should think not only about the liturgy but also about the theology and spirituality of an Individual Church. Any attempt to generalize or destroy a Rite is to destroy the patrimony of the universal Church. That is why the Church has clearly affirmed that all the liturgical rites of the Church should be preserved³.

II. Rites in particular

1. Syro-Malabar Rite

The origin of Christianity in Malabar according to tradition goes back to the apostle St. Thomas⁴. The history of Christianity in India till the arrival of the Portuguese

2. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, No. 1.

3. *Ibid*, No. 6.

4. E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India* (an authorized adaptation from the French, by E. R. Hambye) Calcutta 1957; W. L. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, Cambridge 1956; P. J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, Bombay 1970; A. M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. I, Bangalore 1984.

(1498) is very little known. From all the available historical evidences it is concluded that from remote times St. Thomas Christians were connected with the Persian Church. It would be a safe historical assumption to state that Christianity spread, at first, among the diaspora Jews settled in India just as it was the case with Christianity in the Persian Empire. These communities, both in Persia and India grew together and once the Persian Church, because of its historical advantages, attained a prominent place the Malabar Church became dependent on it in its hierarchical structure. The Malabar Church was definitely connected with the See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon by A. D. 450⁵.

There were four Churches connected with St. Thomas: the Church in India, of Mesopotamia, of Edessa and Persia proper. The first and the last claim to have had the Apostle's direct preaching. Mesopotamia was preached by Mar Mari, a disciple of Mar Addai and Edessa by Mar Addai, the disciple of St. Thomas. In the fourth century when these Churches came into contact with each other, it was only natural that all of them liked to express their apostolic unity in one liturgy. St. Thomas Christians in India might have adopted the liturgy developed mainly in Edessa, a sister Church indirectly related to St. Thomas⁶.

Thus, from ancient times the East Syrian liturgy was in use among the Malabar Christians and the liturgical language was East Syriac⁷. The Thomas Christians used to call this rite 'the law of Thomas'. However, this rite, though East Syrian in nature, was used in Malabar with certain modifications and adaptations. While using the East Syrian rite for worship the Thomas Christians gave it a local colour⁸. There is a strong feeling today that the East Syrian liturgy is the result of a fourth century coloni-

5. Tisserant-Hambye, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

6. V. Pathikulangara, *Church in India*; Kottayam 1986, p. 68-69.

7. S. Giamil, *Genuinae Relationes inter Sedes Apostolicam et Assyri-
orum seu Chaldeorum Ecclesiam*, Romae 1902, p. 85.

8. P. J. Podipara, 'Hindu in Culture, Christian in Religion, Oriental in Worship' in *Sonderdruck aus Ostkirchliche Studien* 8 (1959) p. 99.

zation, that it was an imposition and substitution for the apostolic liturgy.

Canonical discipline

Since the Malabar Church was hierarchically dependent on the Patriarchate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the canon law, that was in use there should have been *de jure* the canon law of the Malabar Church also; but we do not know how far they were *de facto* applied in Malabar. Moreover, the customs peculiar to Malabar constituted an important part of the discipline so that it could safely be said that canonically Malabar Church was a *sui juris* unit even when dependent hierarchically on Seleucia⁹. The discipline of the Malabar Church at present, is in a hybrid state. We see in it Latin, East Syrian and local elements not fused into one system, but in a state of agglomeration. It may be questioned if the purely Latin elements in the actual canonical set up have any force of law or custom *de jure* though in default of proper laws they are to be followed. It is hoped that the codification of the laws for the Oriental Churches will rectify the situation in general.

Hierarchical set up

The Latin prelates seem to have believed that they had jurisdiction over the St Thomas Christians also. This led to several conflicting situations in the history of the Church. The Church of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar, having the Metropolitan and Arch-deacon of All-India, seemed to them to defy their authority. Their different style of Christian life and their allegiance to the Patriarch of Babylon were the greatest obstacles to their ecclesiastical supremacy. The Thomas Christians always wanted to have bishops of their own rite. In 1887 Holy See erected two Vicariates Apostolic, Trichur and Kottayam, for the Malabar Church. But as in 1600 the See of Angamale was reduced to a bishopric under Goa and was brought under the Padroado, the Prelates of St. Thomas Christians lost jurisdiction over the whole of India. The territorial restric-

9. *Codificazione Canonica Orientale*, Fonti Serie II, Fascicoli VIII, Typis Poliglottis Vaticanis; 1937-40, pp, 26-41.

tion imposed on the Malabar Church was a great impediment to the missionary growth of the Church. Missionary vocations in the Malabar Church have been absorbed by the Latin dioceses and Congregations as the Malabar Church was not permitted to work outside the territorial boundaries imposed on them. After the II Vatican Council there has been a new awareness of the identity and role of the individual Churches. Hence, there has been a shift of attitudes from every quarter and the Malabar Church has been given mission territories in central and north India. With the recent intervention of the Holy See, the right of the Oriental Churches to look after their faithful in their own rites has been affirmed and accepted.

According to latest statistics, there are twentyone dioceses and more than three Million Catholics of the Syro-Malabar rite in India. Almost seventy percent of the vocations to priesthood and religious life are from this Church. This apostolic Church plays a vital role in the life of the Church in India.

2. Syro-Malankara Rite

The arrival of the Portugese missionaries was a turning point in the history of the Church in India. The first relations between the missionaries and the Malabar Christians including their bishops sent by the East Syrian Patriarch were cordial. But soon the missionaries began to suspect the orthodoxy of the latter's faith. They considered heretical and superstitious everything that was not conformable to the Latin rite. Hence they attempted to enforce what they called 'the custom of Rome' over them. They aimed at supplanting this ancient rite and imposing in its stead, the Latin rite. St. Thomas Christians objected to this policy followed by Bishop Roz and his successors which led to a series of conflicts that culminated in the 'Coonan Cross' oath of 1653. The leaders of St. Thomas Christians solemnly swore that they would never be under the Jesuits. The Archdeacon was proclaimed Archbishop of the Thomas Christians, by name Mar Thomas I, though many did not approve this.

In 1665, Mar Gregorios, a bishop of the Jacobite Church was invited to Kerala from the Middle East, presumably for a valid episcopal ordination for the breakaway groups. This Gregorios is mainly instrumental in spreading the Jacobite elements among these separate brethren who came to be called 'Puthenkuttukar' (those who accepted the new belief) as against the 'Pazhayakuttukar' (those who remained faithful to the old belief). The Antiochean or West Syrian liturgy and tradition replaced the East Syrian liturgy for this group. Perhaps this is the only instance of a change of rite by a particular group of faithful in the Church.

Re-union movement and the erection of Syro-Malankara Hierarchy

During the course of centuries there had been individual re-unions from the Jacobite Church to the Catholic Church. In 1926 a synod of bishops, pertaining to the Catholicos group authorized Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany, to open negotiations with Rome for reunion, with the request that provisions be made to keep the Antiochean rite and for the Prelates to keep their ecclesiastical offices. But, when Rome responded favourably, only two Prelates, Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, were willing to take the step. They were re-united to Catholic Church in 1930. Gradually the reunion movement took momentum. In 1932 Pius XI erected the ecclesiastical province of Trivandrum as the metropolitan See and Tiruvalla as suffragan. The Antiochean rite which they were allowed to continue after reunion was called Syro-Malankara rite.

Liturgy

The Syro-Malankara rite is derived from the West Syrian rite which is also called the Antiochean rite. The liturgical language is West Syriac while as secondary language Malayalam is used. The Sacred Oriental Congregation decreed that the Prelates and the faithful should be received into the Catholic Church "assuring that the pure Syro-Antiochean rite will be conserved and therefore, there will not be any confusion of this rite with the Syro-Malabar rite which is Syro-Chaldean in origin"¹⁰.

10. *Letter of the Apostolic Delegation of the East Indies*, Sept. 14, 1930; Prot. n. 2080/30 Fs. II-VIII, p 83.

At present there are three dioceses and more than three hundred thousand Catholics of the Syro-Malankara rite in India.

3. Latin Rite

The term 'Roman' rite is in relation to the place of origin of this rite and the term 'Latin' rite is in relation to the original liturgical language used in this liturgy.

The Latin rite was known in India even before the arrival of the Portuguese. Joannes De Marignoli, Papal legate, who visited Malabar in 1348 testifies to the existence of a Latin Church at Quilon¹¹. But these Latin rite Christians who were in Malabar in the fourteenth century became extinct before the arrival of the Portuguese. It was in the sixteenth century that Portuguese missionaries came to India. They converted many in Malabar, especially among the fishermen. The greatest missionary, St. Francis Xavier wrote from India in 1544 that in one month he converted more than ten thousand persons in Travancore¹². All these converts were received into the Latin rite.

The diocese of Goa was erected in 1533 with jurisdiction over the territories from Cape of Good Hope to India and China including the adjacent islands¹³. In 1886 Pope Leo XIII established the hierarchy of the Latin rite in India under the Sacred Congregation de Prop. Fide. Still the St. Thomas Christians were under the Latin jurisdiction. In 1887, effecting a ritual separation between the Latins and Thomas Christians, the Holy See erected two Vicariates apostolic, Trichur and Kottayam under the non-Carmelite Latin rite Prelates. In 1917 the Thomas Christians came directly under the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

Liturgy

The Latin Church in India follow the Latin liturgy in its Roman form. This rite and tradition which is Western in its origin goes back to the apostles St. Peter and Paul and has its origin and development in Rome. So it is also

11. *FS. II-IX*, pp. 13-14.

12. *Jesuit Archives*, Rome, Goa, f.43.

13. *Bullarium Patronatus Portugaliae Regum*, Lisbon 1862-79. Vol. I, p. 148.

called the Roman rite. Since the Latin rite in India in its disciplinary and liturgical matters, is part of the worldwide Latin Church, it does not face many critical problems on liturgy and tradition, except perhaps with regard to indigenization and adaptation.

According to latest statistics there are more than eight million Catholics of the Latin rite in the 93 dioceses of India.

Conclusion

These are the three liturgical rites in India. They are all rites of the Church. In so far as a liturgical tradition is lived and practised in a place and approved by the Church it becomes a patrimony of the universal Church. Hence no liturgical tradition is to be relegated to the background as irrelevant or insignificant. A single liturgy alone cannot express or adequately contain the full spiritual wealth of the Church nor its diverse aspects. The different liturgies are the different expressions of the Christian faith or the different 'styles of Christian life'. The Catholic Church is one in her faith and doctrines but diverse in her rites and customs. So the different rites of the Church are in no way against the unity of the Church but rather they do manifest her universality more clearly.

Every liturgy is the liturgy of the universal Church even when it is followed by a minority group or confined to certain national boundaries. Each of these rites has equal right to exist. But unfortunately, many Roman rite Catholics tend to equate themselves and no others with 'the Catholic Church'. They find it difficult to squeeze into their notion of the Catholic Church such rites as Syro-Malabar or Syro-Malankara. At present there is a budding interest in getting to know the other rites and their traditions. It is noteworthy that Pope John Paul II has acclaimed the Oriental rites for their veneration of Mary. As Catholics we should accept all these different rites of the Church as they are, respect them and rejoice in their growth and development.

Thomas Elavanal

Liturgical Inculturation in India: Problems and Prospects of Experimentation

Introduction

This year 1988 marks the Silver Jubilee of the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, which is now well known as the *Magna Carta* or the great Charter of liturgical renewal and adaptation. It is known that a joint programme is being planned by the CBCI commission for Christian Life and the NBCLC to celebrate the event in a fitting manner from December 4 to 8. Soon after the Council, ways and means of implementing its vision of liturgical reform, renewal and inculturation began to be thought out and planned in the different Churches of Asia and Africa, to speak only of the third world. The Churches in India too responded promptly to this clarion call of the Council, and for the past 25 years different programmes in this regard have been organized and executed with varying degrees of success.

Following the Council's norms regarding liturgical adaptation, which are substantially enshrined in the articles 37-40 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, we have to distinguish between two types of adaptations -- ordinary and radical -- and see how far these have been realized so far in the Church of India. Simultaneously we have also to make a distinction between the adaptation-efforts of the Latin and Oriental Churches in India. In this connection, to pinpoint these efforts in both cases, we shall have to consider the part played by the NBCLC on the one hand,

and that by Dharmaram College, Bangalore on the other'. Finally we shall also have to touch the controversial issue of 'An Indian Liturgy for the Church in India', before making our concluding remarks.

I. Response of the Latin Church

A historical survey will convince us that the Latin Church responded more readily and enthusiastically than the Oriental Churches to the above call of the Council¹. And this response of the Latin Church is well registered by the implementation of the Reform Directives from Rome on the one hand, and by the further efforts at adapting the liturgy to the religio-cultural genius of the country.

1. Implementation of the reform directives

The Council considered reform of the liturgy to be one of the most important factor in the renewal of the Church as a whole, and so it proposed 'active, full and conscious participation of all the faithful' as the most important guiding principle of the liturgical reform². In this perspective the most urgently needed reforms may be noted: vernacular translation of the texts of the reformed liturgy, sacraments, sacramentals in the Latin language, new disposition of the altar towards the people, construction of new churches according to the new Directives, use of lectionary and homily especially in conventual Masses, adopting regional language and music in liturgical singing which is to be more congregational than choral, adoption of postures and gestures within the prescribed limits and in keeping with the cultural and social patterns of life in the given area etc³.

1) This is for two reasons: one, Oriental Churches are too much conscious of their identity and Apostolic origin, and so they are rather skeptical about renewal and adaptation, being afraid of losing or diluting it in the process. Secondly, they are relatively more at home with the Indian socio-cultural milieu.

2) Cf. Const. Liturgy Nos. 14,27,30 and many others

3) Cf. D.s. Amalorpavadass, ed. *Post Vatican Liturgical Renewal in India at all Levels during a Decade (1963-73)*, NBCLC: Bangalore, 1976, pp.25-26, (hereafter Amalorpavadass, *Post-Vatican*),

These and other aspects of reform were long overdue, because the Council of Trent had insisted on absolute uniformity in matters of liturgical celebrations — liturgical books, language, music, actions and so on⁴. Conciliar document on liturgy outlined the above-said reforms in a general way⁵, and a number of post-conciliar Roman documents time and again detailed particular acts of reform as well as emphasized their immediate implementation⁶. However the action of implementation required a careful and systematic approach in order to avoid opposition of the people who had so long been used to an altogether different liturgical practice. It is here that the NBCLC Bangalore comes very much into the lime light, playing a unique role in this regard. Though it was only in its budding stage, it took keen interest in the implementation of the reforms by means of a number of practical steps — consultations, conferences, seminars and courses on the national, regional and diocesan levels⁷. Thus we may roughly say that the first phase of implementation lasted for about five years from 1963 to 1968; but its second phase continued further simultaneously with the next period of liturgical adaptation from 1968 to 1974⁸.

2. Attempts at adaptation in the liturgy

We are now considering a second aspect of the whole question of liturgical renewal in the Latin Church

4) Soon after the Council of Trent and the official publication of the liturgical books, Pope Sixtus II set up the (Sacred) Congregation of Rites as a watch-dog to keep uniformity of celebration and fixity of the rubrics.

5) Cf. Const.Liturgy Nos. 37-40, 14,21,23,30,35,41,50.

6) Austin Flannery, ed. *Vat II More Post Conciliar Documents*, Vol II Ledermans: Michigan, 1982, pp. 1-119; Paul Puthanangady, *Initiation to Christian Worship*, TPI: Bangalore, 1977, pp. 131-141

7) For an overall study of the role of the NBCLC, one has to go through atleast the 10 vols. published in this regard (3 vols of Post Vat. Lit. Renewal, 4 vols. of All India Lit.Meeting, 1 vol. of Bishops and Priests Leaders of Lit.Renewal, one vol. of Lit. in Major Seminaries and one vol. of Towards Indigenization in the Liturgy, all books being NBCLC publications).

8) Amalorpavadass, *Towards Indigenization in the Liturgy*, NBCLC Bangalore, (not dated), p.23 (Hereafter Amalor, Indigenization).

of India. If implementation was the dominant concern during the first period in question, which was symbolized by the programme of the I All-India Liturgical Meeting in Feb. 1968, the main focus during the subsequent period from 1969 was on adaptation, without forgetting however the need for continued and fuller implementation. And interestingly this double concern was aptly indicated by the programme of the II All-India Liturgical Meeting in Jan. 1969 in which only one day was devoted for implementation and three days for adaptation. Adaptation itself was conceived at different levels.

a. At the sensible and external level

This is a rather minor and peripheral level. It concerns for instance, the use of Indian objects, gestures, postures, languages, music, art etc. in the celebration of the liturgy. The main purpose is to create and maintain an Indian atmosphere of prayer and worship, insisting on silence and interiority at prayer. The above-said Liturgical Meeting, after four days of hard work, produced some important documents: one of them was regarding short-term and minor adaptations in the liturgy, another was a draft scheme for preliminary experimentation in the Liturgy of the Mass.

In May 1969 took place in Bangalore the historic event of the All-India Seminar on Church in India Today. Authorities thought it to be a fitting occasion to introduce these minor adaptations and as a whole they were 'hailed enthusiastically by the over 600 participants representing a cross-section of the whole Church from north to south, east to west'⁹. On that occasion "nearly 200 priests celebrated according to the new rite — going to the altar barefoot, using Indian vestments and forms of reverence, burning incense in a copper bowl, lighting oil lamps, and having flowers, fruits and broken coconuts presented at the Offertory"¹⁰.

9) See Amalorpavadass, *Indigenization* p 30

10) *L'Osservatore Romano*, Aug.6, 1970, cited in *Church in India and Cultural Integration*, Mar Louis Press; Ernakulam, P.6

When that event appeared in the Catholic press a long debate followed on the question of such external adaptations, ranging from enthusiastic approval to scathing criticism. For example, referring to the many Indian things used in that liturgy, the Editorial of *The New Leader* wrote derisively that in it 'there was a display of coconuts, sandalwood' incense, burning joss-sticks and flowers strewn around'¹¹. Moreover the Editor made two pertinent observations in this context which are worth noting, viz. — the importance of interiorization of the values signified by those objects, gestures and postures, and the need of a long process of educating the people prior to introducing such adaptations on the parish level. This last observation is particularly true because these 'proposals were by and large welcomed by the clergy and the faithful wherever they were introduced with adequate catechesis, pastoral and psychological preparation, and wherever people could experience a well-celebrated Mass integrating these adaptations'¹².

b. Profound or radical adaptation

Article 40 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy deals with a more radical type of adaptation that may require changes beyond the limits of the typical editions of the liturgical books. This is the case, for example, with the Word in the liturgy, or texts in general used in the liturgy. Their mere vernacular translations from the original Latin will not fully serve the purpose. In fact the Congregation for Divine Worship in its Instruction on Translation says: 'Texts translated from another language are clearly not sufficient for the celebration of a fully renewed liturgy. Creation of new texts will be necessary'¹³. This instruction on the one hand opened the way for meaningful translation of the Biblical word and the sacramental word, and on the other encouraged composi-

11) *The New Leader*, June 22, 1969

12) Amalorpavadass, *Indigenization*, PP.30-31

13) Instruction of the Cong. for Divine Worship on Translation No.43, cited in *New Orders of the Mass for India*, publ. by NBCLC, 1974, P. 17 (Hereafter New Masses).

tion of original liturgical texts as authentic expressions of the worshipping community.

i. Original composition of Liturgical Texts: Speaking about original compositions in this regard, we are in the first place concerned with the *anaphora* which is the core of the Eucharistic celebration. Anaphora or Eucharistic prayer derives its name from the ritual 'thanksgiving' addressed by Christ to the Father at the Last Supper. Undoubtedly no single formulation can exhaust all the theological, pastoral and spiritual richness of this unique Prayer. That is why in the early liturgical tradition, especially of the East, we have a variety of formulations and indigenous expressions of this Prayer. But for centuries the Latin Rite had only one *anaphora*, viz, the Roman *anaphora*. This situation was improved when Rome published in 1968 three more Eucharistic Prayers. However, this was not enough, because, 'the Prayer of the Church is always the prayer of some actual community assembled here and now'¹⁴. This conviction of the Roman Congregation encouraged composition of many new *anaphoras* in countries like Holland, France, Belgium etc. and this proliferation of new *anaphoras* in the western countries in the early 1970s shows that 'the reason for variety and new composition is not only the inexhaustible riches of such a prayer that cannot be contained in one single formulation, but also the needs of the worshipping community and the exigencies of relevance'¹⁵.

ii. Towards an Indian Anaphora: The above considerations convinced the Liturgy Commission of the imperative need to compose new *anaphoras* for India. The Commission furnished guide-lines to compose it and in the II All-India Liturgy Meeting in Jan. 1969 a sub-commission was set up to do it in the light of the guide-lines. Meanwhile the Congregation for Divine Worship encouraged the attempt through a letter addressed to the Chairman of the CBCI Commission for Liturgy saying that 'the proposal to compose a new Indian Anaphora in collaboration with experts in

14) Ibid.

15) Amalorpavadass *Indigenization*, P.48

different fields is most welcome'¹⁶. Accordingly after much research and wide consultations an *anaphora* was composed by the sub-commission under the directorship of Fr. Dupuis, S. J. In the III All-India Liturgy Meeting in Dec. 1971 it was studied in depth and approved as a substantial contribution to the prayer of the Indian Church. In the following year it was submitted to the CBCI, held in Madras for formal approval to use it. It obtained 60 out of the 80 votes, but it was not declared passed, because there arose in the mean time a dispute about the majority required¹⁷. It found place, however, in the book *New Orders of the Mass for India*, for private circulation and experimentation, published by the NBCLC in the year 1974 'pro manuscripto'. One cannot give a commentary of it here, but only add that following the basic structure of any Christian Eucharist, the present Order of Mass has drawn inspiration from the modern Hindu Agamic tradition and incorporated a few *upacaras* (signs of hour) and *mudras* (hand-gestures) in the different parts of the Eucharistic liturgy¹⁸.

By and large this attempt of the Latin Rite in India supported very much by the NBCLC to give shape to an Indian Order of Mass is indeed praiseworthy, and this Order may be considered a climax of its efforts to Indianize Christian worship according to the spirit of Vat. II and the tradition of the Latin Church in India¹⁹.

II. Response of the Oriental Churches

A. Syro-Malankara Church

First of all it may be noted that some of the reforms envisaged by Vat. II were already there in the Syro-Malan.

16) *New Masses*, P. 17. 17) Amalorpavadass, *Indigenization*, P 48

18) For an introduction and explanation of the Mass, see *New Masses*, pp.9-62.

19) Subsequently there have been other individual attempts at Indianized Masses for special occasions, like Conferences, Seminars etc. in NBCLC and elsewhere. Moreover, apart from the four Eucharistic Prayers for the Roman Church, mentioned already, five more have been officially approved for use in India by the Cong. of Divine Worship.

kara liturgical celebration. For example, use of the vernacular both in the Mass and in the sacraments, active participation of the faithful, communion under both species, congregational singing etc. Further, following the spirit of the Liturgy Constitution of Vatican II and the Directives from Rome, a revised and improved translation of the text of the Missal with nine *anaphoras* was made. Similar work was also done with regard to the texts of the sacraments and sacramentals.

Now, the Malankara Church authorities feel that, in the question of liturgical inculturation, they cannot possibly go beyond these few reforms mentioned. As one of its spokesman says: "The main problem that confronts us with regard to the renewal of the Liturgy is the intimate relation of our Liturgy with that of our separated brethren. The Syro-Malankara Church exists and works mainly for the re-union of these separated brethren. They in general and particularly the Jacobites are very conservative with regard to their liturgical practice. Hence any substantial change in the text as well as in the manner of celebration without their cooperation would be detrimental to our mission"²⁰. No doubt, as long as such a conviction and vision about one's mission exists it will be a major obstacle in the way of what we are considering here. Fr. Samuel of this Church says, "Introduction of an 'Indian Liturgy' in place of the existing Syro-Malankara Liturgy would mean losing our own identity"²¹.

B. Syro-Malabar Church

The question of liturgical reform and adaptation in the Syro-Malabar Church is much more complex and controversial than in the other two Catholic Churches of India. Polarization that started with the higher-ups in the Church has gradually filtered down to the middle orders, reaching of late the lower orders at least in small doses. In one direction there is almost complete focus on Chaldeanization, whereas in the other direction the emphasis is on Indianization. This crisis in the Church seems to be largely due to

20) Amalorpavadass, *Post Vatican*, p. 248.

21) *Ibid.* P.251

a pre-Vatican liturgical vision and programme of the Oriental Congregation itself²².

1. Towards restoration and reform of Liturgy

Regarding the Syro-Malabar Rite, restoration and that alone was the declared policy of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, especially for the period 1955-1962. Thus a fully restored Chaldean Pontifical was given in 1959 and a restored Chaldean 'Mass of the Apostles' in the year 1962. Some important prayers in these texts were still in Syriac.

Following the reform-directives of Vat.II for renewal and up-dating of liturgical texts and tradition, the Syro-Malabar hierarchy constituted a Liturgical Commission in Dec. 1963, with Archbishop (later Cardinal) Parecattil as its President. The Commission, after a broad-based consultation from priests and people, revised the restored text of the Mass, taking into account the present context and pastoral exigencies of the Church. Later it came into use since 1968 *ad experimentum*, with the approval of the Congregation. Under the same Liturgical Commission other liturgical books were also revised and/or translated gradually from the year 1966 to 1973²³.

2. In the path of inculturation

Against a small minority of Chaldean protagonists, majority of the people, priests and bishops love to see their Church grow fully into an indigenous one, integrating its triple heritage — Chaldean, Western (Portuguese) and above all Indian. In this attempt at integration an outstanding contribution is that of the late Cardinal Pareca-

22) Already before Vat.II, the Oriental Congregation had begun the programme of restoring the Syro-Malabar liturgy to its pristine form eliminating from it all Latin elements. And after Vatican the same programme is vigorously continued without caring for the Council's new vision and policy of renewal and adaptation (apart from restoration, if necessary) of liturgy to the present context of the Church. On this question read carefully Cardinal Parecattil, *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I See It*, publ. by Fr. Abel, Ernakulam, 1987.

23) For a short Report by Fr. Silas CMI on the list of books thus published, see Amalorpavadass, *Post Vatican*, P. 255.

til. When many other bishops favourable to this process were looking helpless within a divided hierarchy, he went ahead with it against all odds. His efforts in this regard for over two decades are well known and well documented²⁴ and so need not be repeated here. Nevertheless, I should make a few references to his efforts towards liturgical Inculturation.

Inculturation was one of his most cherished subjects. Like the late Pope Paul VI of happy memory²⁵, in his public speeches and writings he has left no stone unturned to impress his hearers with regard to its different aspects — theological, liturgical, pastoral and historical. He had a progressive vision of liturgical inculturation, of creating even new forms of Indian Anaphoras, in which he was certainly inspired by article 40 of the Liturgical Constitution of Vat. II. In this programme of Indianization he tried not only to adopt an Indian life-style wearing saffron cassock and *rudrakshamala* but also to practise Indian values like simplicity, honesty, compassion, *swadhyaya* etc. Finally he also composed his famous *Bharatiya pooja* integrating various Indian elements, notably some sections of the Indian *anaphora* mentioned.

3. Towards an Indian Order of the Mass:

Dharmaram contribution

Soon after the promulgation of Vatican II's *magna Carta* of liturgical indigenization there was a general ferment of it growing in the Catholic Church all over the world. In India too a lot of thinking and talk about it at various levels went on for quite some time, though nothing concrete was put forward by anybody. At any rate assessing the general trend, the CBCI Commission for Liturgy,

24) See his own book, mentioned in note 24, especially the several Appendices at the end of the book.

Also several articles in the book, *Cardinal Parecatil: The Man, His Vision and Contribution*, ed. by Mathias Mundadan, Star publ., Alwaye, 1988. Read especially the contributions by Fr. Amalorpavadass and Bishop Gratian Mundadan.

25) Cf. Jacob Manathodath, *The Inculturation of Local Churches according to the Teaching of Pope Paul VI* (Dissertation unpublished), Gregorian Univ., Rome, 1984

stated in the year 1968: "There is no more discussion as to whether we should adapt or not; adaptation has to be done and there is no need to prove it."

"The whole problem is, first of all, how to go about it; secondly, what is to be adapted; and thirdly, how far we can go in the process of adaptation"²⁶. 'How to go about it' was certainly the most crucial question as far as the beginning of the programme was concerned. Without any guide-lines to follow no body dared to take the risk of scandal and criticism, and the bishops were still groping in the dark waiting for some light from anywhere as to how to begin it. Individuals here and there in the Latin Church were trying out something, but without giving much publicity. The NBCLC was just beginning to function and Fr. Amalorpavadass had not yet given shape to any Indian prayer model, but only seriously thinking about it.

It was then around the year 1967-68 that a pioneering team of professors and students of Dharmaram College set themselves to the task of shaping something concrete as an 'Indian form of worship'. Naturally the first attempt was a very simple one, viz. a service of the Word or Bible service which was then gaining currency after Vat. II. But the group, which included the present writer also, did it in an entirely new way with ritual gestures, prayers and objects taken from the Indian tradition.

The CBCI Ordinary Meeting was to be held that year in the Dharmaram College, and the bishops who were anxiously waiting for some concrete models of Indian Christian worship, were highly impressed when this prayer-service was presented²⁷. Soon after that it was revised and enlarged a bit, before it was celebrated at the NBCLC as requested by its Director Fr. Amalorpavadass, on the occasion of the II All-India Liturgy Meeting in Jan. 1969. It was mainly an assembly of liturgy experts — those

26) Cf. *Word and Worship*, Bangalore, Dec. 1968, p. 158.

27) Among those who spoke words of appreciation were the then two Cardinals Gratias and Parecattil.

who are to show the way for the people in new forms of worship, breaking grounds in the tradition. And their reaction to this novel worship showed that it not only impressed them, but also provoked to try out more creative models in the path of liturgical inculturation²⁸.

Shortly after the CBCI Meeting mentioned above, at which the late Cardinal Parecattil also was present, he asked the then Rector of Dharmaram College to entrust to a select group of staff and students the task of preparing an Indian Liturgy in view of the coming All-India Seminar on Church in India Today. The group promptly set to work, studying aspects of Christian liturgy, Hindu ritual worship and Indian music. Towards the middle of May, 1969 the text of a new liturgy in Malayalam with important Indian elements of worship and a new *anaphora* in the Indian thought-pattern in particular was got ready. During the National Seminar, referred to earlier, this liturgy was celebrated twice on May 23 — in the morning and at noon. The morning celebration was in Malayalam in which the text was originally written. The prayers were recited in the Vedic mode of recital, with a certain rhythm and tone, quite expressive of the inner spirit. The sacred music was of the Bhakti-type, bhajan or Ravindra-geet.

From 1969 to 1973 the text, still in manuscript form underwent several revisions and the rites some more adaptations, while it was continued to be celebrated in a select group at Dharmaram. Meanwhile demands came in from many places for a copy of the text, and so the text and rites were finalized and printed as a Missal and published 'Pro Manuscripto' by Dharmaram College Liturgical Centre, when the present writer was its Director, in the year 1973. Within six months the five hundred

28) The present writer still remembers what one of the big shots of that assembly told us who conducted the service: 'Please wait! let us also come'. It meant that the Latin Church had not yet made any concrete step so daring in the direction of inculturation. Unfortunately, this daring and creative movement of the Syro-Malabar Church could not make much head way; it almost died out for which the divided hierarchy is mainly responsible.

copies were exhausted and more demands flowed in, and thus we were forced to print it again changing its format a bit in the following year 1974.

III. An Indian Liturgy for the Church in India: Problems and Prospects

We now come to this crucial and much debated question — towards only one liturgy for the whole Church in India. This may be desirable; in reality however hardly feasible for several reasons: diversity of religious and cultural traditions from one end to the other of the country is one reason. Another reason is plurality of ecclesial traditions recently re-affirmed by the Holy See all of which do not approach the question of liturgical inculturation in the same way. A third one is the reality of contemporary India which is quite different from that of ancient or medieval or of pre-Independent India. An Indian Anaphora which is meaningful, relevant and fitting in all these different temporal contexts is next to impossible. On the other hand, we need an Indian liturgy to bring salvation (*mukti*) to the varied situations of human life — situations of slums and cities, poverty and plenty, health as well as sickness, power as well as powerlessness and so on. To put it differently, an Indian *anaphora* shaped in the thought-pattern of the Vedas, Upanishads or of the Bhakti religion, may not be able to bring 'salvation' to the Tribals of M.P., to the Dalit-movements, to the poor and oppressed who are struggling to liberate themselves from all kinds of bondages in which they have been kept so long.

But what we can reasonably aspire to, in this matter, may be expressed in this way. Every individual Church in India must make honest efforts to Indianize her liturgy constantly so that it will be fully meaningful, relevant and fitting in the varied contexts of life in India. Now, in this process there will be many converging aspects of the different liturgies. It will not be a static but dynamic convergence which may serve as point of departure to give shape to a common liturgy of basic unity with a

plurality of forms depending on India's cultural and religious traditions, both ancient and modern, as well as the ecclesial identity and pastoral contexts of the different Churches.

Concluding remarks

There are other aspects of inculturation in the liturgy which we have not touched in the above discussion, e. g. use of the Word from the scriptures of other religions in our liturgy. This is still an unsettled question and several aspects of it have to be taken into account²⁹. Similarly deeper aspects of liturgical adaptation will go hand in hand with a corresponding Indian theology and spirituality. And it can be seen that in the present decade there is more thinking and discussion of the shaping of relevant Indian theology or even theologies, and of living deeper Indian spirituality.

This may be the reason that in the 1980s compared to 1970s there is much less talking and writing about inculturation in liturgy, and consequently we have not also touched it in our discussion. We may hope that inculturation in liturgy will figure again when theology and spirituality have become sufficiently Indianized.

29) For its various aspects see Amalorpavadass, *Indigenization* p. 51. That it is an open question may be seen from Amalorpavadass ed., *Research Seminar on Non-Biblical Scriptures*, NBCLC: Bangalore, 1974

The Liturgical Crisis in the Syro-Malabar Church

The Syro-Malabar Church has undergone many crises during its history. The most serious of them was in the 17th century which ended up in the schism of 1653, the so-called 'Coonan Cross Oath' after which a sizable section of the Syro-Malabar Church left the catholic fold. The latest crisis that has been brewing within this Church is concerned with the reform of the liturgy. And now the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in Rome has intervened with some formulas of solution, which, it seems, have been accepted by all concerned. However, the issues raised in this controversy have already become part of the history of the Syro-Malabar Church. In this article we shall try to pinpoint the reasons which precipitated this crisis, name the main controverted issues and point out the solutions suggested by Rome.

1

This first part deals with the underlying reasons which caused a polarisation of opinions regarding the Syro-Malabar liturgical reforms.

1. Syro-Malabar Church: a hyphenated Church?

The Church of 'St. Thomas Christians' in India is called the Syro-Malabar Church. But in recent times there has been attempts to call this Church 'Chaldeo-Indian' or 'Indo-Chaldean'¹.

The root-cause for the crisis in liturgy goes back to the fundamental problem of ascertaining the real origin of

1. Cf. V. Pathikulangara, *Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy* 2, Kottayam 1982. pp. vi-vii

this Church. If the Syro-Malabar Church is simply an offshoot of the Chaldean Church, it seems there is need only of restoration. In fact, a minority group of the Syro-Malabar Church believe that a pure restoration of the Chaldean tradition, especially liturgical, is the need of the time in the light of the decree of Vatican II on the Oriental Churches². On the contrary, the vast majority of the Syro-Malabar bishops, priests, religious and laity consider that such a restoration *in toto* will not only render the liturgy irrelevant to the people of today, but also undermine the very identity of this apostolic Church.

2. Restoration, revision and adaptation

One of the thrusts of the Second Vatican Council was the need for 'restoration', especially in the liturgy. But the restoration was not supposed to be implemented without any relation to the necessary process of revision and adaptation. A mere restoration, it was pointed out, would end up in a state of stagnation. Vatican II document on liturgy, while speaking about the need for restoration is always keen to insist on the need of revision and adaptation³. Of course, the decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches speaks amply about the need of 'going back to the ancestral ways' (OE 6). But this paragraph does not and cannot deny the principles laid down by other documents of the Council. According to C. Vagaggini, a *peritus* of Vatican II, more than 70 paragraphs of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy are applicable to both Westerners and Easterners alike⁴.

Rome was decisively in favour of a pure restoration as a first step towards reform. The revision and adaptation, it was suggested, could follow later. The Commissions appointed by Rome in 1934 and in 1954 were aiming at realizing this end. But the bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church who knew the genuine pastoral needs of the faithful consistently resisted this attempt of Rome⁵. However,

2. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 6

3. Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 4, 21, 23, 34, 36, 37-40.

4. Cf. *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 78 (1964) 226 ff.

5. For details on this part of the history see, Cardinal Parecattil *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I See It*, cit., pp. 14-50.

despite their objections, the text of the Mass was simply restored and introduced in 1962.

Naturally, the implementation of such a restored text did not satisfy the bishops, clergy or the people. They continued to argue for the need of revision and adaptation. But the demand for a simultaneous process of restoration, revision and adaptation was consistently rejected and this led to the present crisis. However, this principle is accepted by the latest 'Directives' of Rome⁶.

3. History and theology v. pastoral needs

The Second Vatican Council can be described as a 'Pastoral Council'. The documents of the Council in general aim at fulfilling the pastoral demands of modern times. At the Liturgical Congress of Assisi held in 1986 the study group on pastoral liturgy reached the following conclusions: (i) The hermeneutic principle of the liturgy is the *pastoral needs* (ii) The key principle of the conciliar reform of the liturgy is *pastoral*. (iii) The criteria for adaptation or inculturation in the liturgy are *pastoral motivations*⁷. This does not however mean that the historical and theological perspectives are left in the oblivion.

Examining the history of the Syro-Malabar liturgical crisis one finds that there did exist a divergence in the approaches of Rome and the Syro-Malabar hierarchy. Rome, as can be rightly expected, tried to emphasize the historical-theological reality of worship and hence formulated the directives regarding the liturgical renewal accordingly. Rome was legitimately concerned with keeping the rich treasures of the liturgical past, as far as possible, intact. This stand collided with that of the bishops whose immediate concern was the needs of the faithful. These two approaches led to a tension. As a matter of fact, both positions were legitimate. Although the directives given by Rome prior to the prepara-

6. Hereafter 'May 1988 Directives'

7. Cf. AA. VV. *Assisi 1986 - 1986. Il Movimento liturgico tra riforma conciliare e attese del Popolo di Dio*, Assisi - Cittadella 1987, p. 372.

tion of the text of Raza had an overtone of history and theology⁸, the 'May 1988 Directives' on the Order of the Solemn and Simple Mass have tried to give due weight to the pastoral demands of the bishops. And hence we read in them: "The good of the faithful ('bonum fidelium') is the pastoral norm governing all liturgical legislation" (No.2). And again, "The particular liturgical norms governing a Rite exist to preserve intact the substantial unity of the tradition" (No 3). The document goes a step further and says: 'This does not deprive the local Ordinary of his right and duty to resolve concrete pastoral issues and authorise local customs in the renewed liturgy within legitimate limits' (No.4).

4. "Pro-Oriental" or "anti-Latin"?

An honest student of the Syro-Malabar Church will have to place on record the contributions of the Western missionaries to this Church in various fields. At the same time, one should also admit the historical fact that some of the undue interventions of the missionaries, especially in the Synod of Diamper in 1599, have tampered with the Eastern liturgical and canonical traditions of the Syro-Malabar Church.

The new awareness among the Orientals about their rights as Individual Churches, an awareness which is very strongly felt after the Second Vatican Council, paved the way for a new orientation, particularly among the 'latinised' Orientals. This is the case with the Syro-Malabar Church and it is only legitimate that the unduly latinised elements are eliminated and the Oriental tradition re-established. But it so happened that the "Latinization" which had been the misery of the Syro-Malabar Church in the past, came to be a scarecrow in the minds of some people. As a slogan, it served to ward off even desirable changes.

8. Cf. The 'Observations on the Order of the Holy Mass of the Syro-Malabar Church 1981', of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (Prot. N. 955/65) of March 1, 1983. Hereafter 'Observations'. Also, 'Final Judgement of the S. Congregation for the Oriental Churches concerning the Order of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana' (Prot. N. 955/65) of July 24, 1985. Hereafter 'Final Judgement'.

5. The crisis precipitates

According to the Syro-Malabar tradition there are three forms of celebrating the Eucharist: Raza (Most Solemn Form), Solemn and Simple Forms. Since the process of restoration began the discussions were held on the solemn and simple forms. But, for the first time in 1983 the Congregation for the Oriental Churches instructed the Syro-Malabar hierarchy to prepare the text of Raza so that a complete and most solemn form of the text for the Mass be available⁹. The bishops agreed.

This decision was taken to restore the ancient structure and style of the liturgy almost intact. However even while such a decision was taken by the hierarchy, there was a clear understanding among the bishops that before implementing the text of the Simple Form of the Mass there would be sufficient effort to revise and adapt it to the pastoral needs of the faithful of today. Unfortunately after the promulgation of the Raza text, a minority group insisted that there was no need of revision and adaptation as regards the text of the Simple Form. This insistence worsened the crisis. There arose strong protestations from the part of those who stood for revision and adaptation. Happily at last the "May 1988 Directives" of Rome has responded positively to the genuine pastoral demands of the Syro-Malabar hierarchy.

II

In this second part we shall deal with some of the main points of contention and the arguments supportive of these points.

I. Mass facing the congregation: This has been one of the thorny issues. The vast majority of the priests of the Syro-Malabar Church began Mass facing the congregation some 20 years ago. The clergy and the faithful had on several occasions expressed their appreciation of this practice. But a minority group preferred the Mass not facing the congregation in order to keep up the ancient tradition. Rome

9. Cf. 'Observations' p. 4

too was reluctant to bring about any change. It is true that almost all the Oriental Churches families still have the practice of the priest celebrating the Mass not facing the congregation. Therefore, this new practice introduced in the Syro-Malabar Church was labelled by some as "latinization". A two-third majority of the Syro-Malabar dioceses are practising the Mass facing the congregation today. No argument was strong enough to change their conviction that this new mode of celebration was pastorally more effective and more congenial to the theological insights of Vatican II on the common priesthood of the faithful. One can understand the difficulty of Rome in making a policy statement on this matter. Therefore the "May 1988 Directives" has judiciously provided room for Mass facing the congregation, although the other manner of its celebration is "highly desirable" (No.64). This is a typical example of accommodating the pastoral concerns of the local Churches.

2. Use of the sanctuary veil: The Oriental Churches are noted for their special emphasis on the "mysterium tremendum" during the eucharistic celebration. A student of history knows well the background which led to such an understanding and the eventual use of altar rails, sanctuary veil etc¹⁰. The majority of the bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church felt that the re-introduction of the sanctuary veil would only separate the people from the celebrant, adversely affecting a better participation. They believed that it would only render the 'mystery' simply 'mysterious' to the advantage of none. But those who are nostalgic about the past insisted on the use of the sanctuary veil during the eucharistic celebration. Since it is more a pastoral problem, Rome felt it opportune to leave the decision to the discretion of the local Ordinary¹¹.

3. The rite of dismissal: After the Liturgy of the Word

10. Cf. G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London 1945, Repr 1975 pp. 480-485

11. 'May 1988 Directives', No. 13

there is the so-called 'Rite of Dismissal'¹². This was introduced during the period of catechumenate and the public penance. According to most of the Syro-Malabar bishops and clergy, it is obsolete and inopportune to make this announcement in the present context. Approving the catechetical value of such a formula, Rome has now given permission to omit it in all forms of the Mass¹³.

4. The problem of 'Double Entry' at the preparation and deposition of the gifts: In the approved text of Raza, the preparation and the deposition of the gifts are arranged in such a way that it can be meaningfully celebrated only if the celebrant is assisted by other ordained ministers. This is not the case in most of the Syro-Malabar churches. This structure cannot be applied when the Mass is celebrated by only one ordained minister. In the latter case, if the structure is not changed, the priest will have to enter the sanctuary at least twice — one before the deposition and the second after the Creed — and 'pretend' that he entered only once. Now the Congregation has proposed a new solution respecting the theological principles and the pastoral demands. This solution avoids the 'double entry' when the Mass is celebrated by only one priest¹⁴.

5. The sign of the Cross at the beginning of the Mass: According to an ancient custom the Mass used to begin with an expression like 'Let us begin the Qurbana in accordance with the command given to you' to which the congregation responded: 'We do this in accordance with the command of Christ'. This was followed by 'Glory to God in the highest'. When the process of restoration took its full swing, Rome decided to eliminate it. The bishops continued to insist on the need of retaining it. Finally the Congregation has decided to make room for this practice in areas where it is already in use¹⁵.

6. The prayer 'Our Father' at the beginning and at the

12. 'Whoever has not received baptism may go out, Whoever has not received the sign of life may go out. Whoever does not receive the Qurbana may go out'. Raza Text, p. 32

13. 'May 1988 Directives', No. 62

14. 'May 1988 Directives', No. 63 e

15. 'Final Judgement', No. 19, 'May 1988 Directives', No. 44.

end of the Mass: According to the Order of the restored Raza the 'Our Father' has to be recited thrice — at the beginning, before communion and at the end. Applying the principle of SC 34, the majority of bishops requested Rome to reduce the number of the 'Our Father'. The 'May 1988 Directives' suggest that the final 'Our Father' be left optional (No. 85).

7. Bema in the middle of the nave: The Bema is a raised platform placed in the *middle* of the nave of the church for the Liturgy of the Word. The majority of the bishops could not accept this suggestion owing to many reasons. First of all, the Syro-Malabar tradition does not seem to have had such a structure at any time in history¹⁶. Besides, in the existing churches it would be impractical to erect such a structure with all its paraphernalia given the scarce space available. Moreover, half of the congregation will be in front of the celebrant and the other half behind him. Therefore the bishops suggested that 'the Liturgy of the Word should be celebrated at a place distinct from the altar. This place for the Liturgy of the Word must be outside the sanctuary, whenever possible'. Now Rome has approved these dispositions of the bishops¹⁷.

8. The offertory procession: In the Eastern tradition there is not the so-called 'offertory procession' of the faithful. These 'offerings' are not meant to be the gifts to be offered by the celebrant at the altar. Nevertheless most of the bishops and the clergy of the Syro-Malabar Church felt that this practice was pastorally very advantageous towards a better participation. It is considered to be a symbolic expression of offering oneself to the Father. It is also quite congenial to the spiritual culture of India — people going to the temples for worship take with them some objects as symbols of offering of themselves to God. Unlike the prohibitive nature of the former directives the 'May 1988 Directives' permit this practice as a popular local custom (No. 25).

16. J. Vellian, *Qurbana a Study: A Commentary on the Syro-Malabar Holy Mass*, Kottayam 1980, p.70.

17. 'May 1988 Directives', No. 14

9. The duration of the Mass: History tells us that the Oriental Churches in general have the practice of celebrating Mass only on Sundays and Feast days. Whereas in the Syro-Malabar Church there is an age-old tradition of celebrating Mass also on week days and a good many people do participate in it. The traditional parishes in the Syro-Malabar Church have even upto three Masses on week days. Naturally, in a rapidly urbanised and industrialised situation, as is the case in India, it is tedious and unwelcome to have long celebrations on week days. The faithful want to participate in the Mass, but at the same time, must also cope with their daily hectic routine of life. Therefore one of the most important pastoral demands of the bishops was that the prayers be arranged in such a way that the Simple Mass could be celebrated in thirty minutes or so, without being forced to say the prayers in a hurry. The options and abbreviations proposed by the Oriental Congregation are conducive to satisfy this felt need of the Syro-Malabar Church.

10. The response "And also with your Spirit": To the greeting of the celebrant 'Peace be with you', the congregation respond 'And also with your spirit'. Here the term 'spirit', according to the East Syrian commentators, means 'the spirit which the priest has received along with his priesthood'. But when translated into Malayalam (*atmavu*) it would mean 'soul'. Therefore the majority of bishops had requested for a change in this response because of this linguistic confusion. But the Congregation has decided to retain this response as found in the restored Raza¹⁸.

11. The elevation at the institution narrative: The bishops had requested Rome to retain the elevation at the Institution Narrative. According to the Eastern tradition due importance has to be given also to the Epiclesis. In order to emphasise the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in the anaphora Rome has suggested that there be no elevation at the Institution Narrative¹⁹.

18. *Ibid.*, No. 23

19. *Ibid.*, No. 30

Apart from the issues raised above, the 'May 1988 Directives' of Rome have touched upon many other pastoral demands of the bishops.

Now it is up to the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference to prepare the text of the Simple and Solemn Forms of the Mass according to the directives given and present it to the Oriental Congregation before December 31, 1988. The new text will have to be introduced 'everywhere by a fixed date, not later than three months after the final approval of the text by the Congregation for the Oriental Churches'²⁰. According to the 'May 1988 Directives', 'the Malayalam text of the liturgy is the competence of the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference in consultation with experts in the language and the liturgy'. This is a very welcome decision.

Conclusion

In this article we have dealt with only the text of the Mass. The Syro-Malabar Church has yet a long way to go before all the liturgical texts are revised, officially approved and promulgated. These include the Sacraments and Sacramentals, the Pontifical, the Divine Office, the Calendar etc. The Oriental Congregation has consistently mentioned the need of adaptation and inculturation in its documents sent to the Syro-Malabar bishops in 1980, 1983, 1985 and 1988. It is hoped that the "via media" formulated by the Congregation 'with the intent of putting together the spirit and the principles of liturgical reform on the one hand and the pastoral needs on the other'²¹ would be a good starting point in future discussions on restoration, revision and adaptation of the Syro-Malabar liturgy.

²⁰. 'May 1988 Directives', No. 10

²¹. From the covering letter of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches accompanying the 'May 1988 Directives', p. 3.

Ways of Worship in Hinduism: Some Guidelines for an Indian Christian Liturgy

Worship of God in some visible form is part of the Hindu way of life. The mode of worship seems to depend very much on the symbolic meaning and functions of the natural or cosmic realities and their religious significance. Religion is generally described in relation to the worship-forms as a system of sacred symbols. They articulate God, who is otherwise invisible and incomprehensible to man, in some form so that man may have devotional approach to the unapproachable and relate himself in some form of submission, obedience, supplication, adoration, thanksgiving, offering and self-surrender. All these acts separately or collectively are considered to be various dispositions or acts of worship. There are individual worship forms, domestic rituals, worship in public shrines and temples as well as socio-religious festivals. All these are together brought under the general appellation 'Hindu Worship'.

1. Main sources

The main sources of worship-forms are derived from the *Pancharatra*, *Agamic*, *Tantric* and *Stotra* texts related to the three main sectarian religious traditions, namely, *Śaivite*, *Vaishnavite* and *Śakti* or *Devi* cult traditions. Epigraphical evidence points to the existence of the Śaivite cult from the first century A.D. onwards, and the early Śaivites belonged to four sects: Śaivas, Pasupatas, Kapalikas and Kalamukhas. The Śaivite sects took very appreciative shape after the deification of Rama,

the hero of Ramayana by Tulasidas. The Vaishnavite cultic tradition originated from the worship of Krishna. Vasudeva and his brother Balarama together with Krishna's two sons and one grandson, Pradyumna, Samba and Anirudha. It took more regionalized forms as *Bhagavad-gita* became popular, which is the discourse narrative in the War episode of the *Mahabharata* where Krishna instructs Arjuna to be dutiful as befitting his caste status. Krishna began to be already worshipped as an incarnation of Vishnu, the Second Form of the Transcendental Reality. This worship became very popular among the clans of Yadavas, Vrishnis and Satvatas, from the last of which the cult took its name *Sattavata*. From the five persons mentioned above as the five Yadava-Vrishni heroes, *pancha-viras* the festivals devoted to them acquired the name *Pancharatra* and the cultic rituals and prayers of *Pancharatra* Vaishnava tradition came to be popular. The *Narayaniya* section of the *Santiparvan* of the *Mahabharata* deals with this school; its followers claim Vedic antiquity for their cult by pointing to the subject referred to as *Ekayana* by Narada in the *Chandogya Upanishad*. This *Pancharatra* or *Bhagavata* School is presupposed in the *Brahma Sutras* (II. ii. 42-5); Sandilya and Narada had contributed hymns and mantras to it.

Similarly there are some minor Upanishads devoted to Devi-cult such as the *Bhavana*, the *Kaula*, the *Tripura* and the *Devi*. Later literature which promoted Śiva, Vishnu and Śakti cults almost equalling the number of Puranas, is known as *Agama* and *Tantra* respectively. Much of the devotional material of the Puranas and Upapuranas are derived from these Agamas and Tantras. *Tantra* is a vague expression which comprehends local and popular divinities and the worship forms developed around them. While *Agama* consists of the traditionally handed down information about worship and rituals in the lineage and succession (*sampradaya*) of the ancient worshippers of the Saivite, Vaishnavite or Śakti traditions, the *Tantra* emphasises the practical procedure of worship requiring special initiation (*diksha*) at the hands of a teacher and esoteric

practice of the rites, rituals and gestures and other performances which motivate a devotee to be enthusiastically involved in the act of worshipping the deity. The manuals of such worship forms are referred to as *Samhitas* which contain materials of four kinds: such as deal with philosophical exposition (*jnana*), meditative exercise (*yoga*) the injunctions regarding the construction of temples, image making etc. (*kriya*) and performace (*charya*).

Still another source of divine worship employed by the general public is collection of *stutis* or *stotras* (psalms). Along the lines of Vedas, Itihasas and Puranas devoted poets in the agamic tradition composed praises and prayers in the form of poetic recitals (rhymes) or eulogies. When devotional cult grew, temples were raised and worship of different forms of deities with a variety of modes of adoration developed, and a large number of hymns came to be chanted on definite intervals and festive occasions. Such chanting became a regular feature in the morning *Kirtans* and the evening *Bhajans*, recently made audible also to the larger public around the temples broadcasting them through loudspeakers. Almost all the great saints and founders of the schools of philosophy and religious movements composed such *stotras*. Manikka Vackar's lyrics in honour of Siva and Mira Bai's *Kirtans* are so inspiring, and they are in no way inferior in evoking devotion when compared to *Bhajagovindam* or *Saundarya-lahari* composed by Sri Sankaracharya. Similar is the case with the Bijak of Kabir or Tukaram's *Bhajans*.

2. Modes of Hindu Worship

There are mainly four modes or ways of worship practised according to the choice of individuals or the preference based on the dedication of the Shrine or Temple:

- (1) *Japa*: recitation of the names of divinity in prescribed formula.
- (2) *Homa*: oblation offered in fire; this is mostly in the Vedic traditions.
- (3) *Dhyana*: meditation on the Supreme Divinity either in its transcendental aspects or according to one's *ishta*-

devata form or in any visualized form as it helps *dharana* (concentration) in the fantasy of the worshipper.

- (4) *Archana*: actual worship of divinity as an honoured guest with all formalities in a temple as prescribed in the Agama texts.

3. Worship in Temples

Worship in a temple is constituted of elaborate rituals and conducted three, five or six times a day. In many famous temples especially those of the cities worship rituals are almost continuous and stretch far into the night depending on the convenience of the people and their special days of celebrations. Priests who officiate in the temple are expected to carry out the official worship not for their own sake but for the welfare of the people of that locality, the state as well as the entire humanity. In this sense the priests are intercessors before God on behalf of the people.

The most significant note of the worship in a temple is its collective character and hence it is known as *parartha* in contrast to the domestic worship which is known as *svārtha*, intended for the worshipper for his immediate family members. The temple is a public place and is the common property of the local community.

Worship in the temple must be carried out in full view of the devotees that have gathered there. Hence provision is always made in the architectural plan of the temple for a viewers' hall in front of the sanctuary. This nave is called *nava-ranga*, *ranga-mandapa* or *mukha-mandapa*. This is usually a highly elegant and elaborately ornate structure. The devotees prefer to be viewers of the worship done on their behalf by the official priests rather than being priests themselves. Their participation is not so active as in the sense of being respondents to the recitations of the priests, rather they remain as silent spectators with a deeply disposed and submissive attitude. This attitude is often described as that of a devoted disciple who arrives at his master's residence for a *darsan* (meeting) which is accompanied by a salutation. After these courtesy for-

malities matter of fact conversation would take place between the disciple and the master. In the same way a devoted worshipper comes to the temple not merely as a curious spectator or a silent witness to observe what is happening there but with some very personal aspirations which are not always very spiritual in nature. He wants to present them before the Deity. All that the devotee wants to speak to the Lord will be muttered in silence while the priest is officiating some prayerful rituals on behalf of the devotee. He receives the offerings of flowers, coconut, fruits or whatever the devotee has brought to the sanctuary and offer them to the Deity on behalf of the devotee. He gives in return to the devotee something of the already offered gifts as the *prasada* of the Lord, as symbol of God's blessing over the offering of the devotee. In ordinary times the worship in the temple ends in such simple form.

4. Priests

Pujaris, the officiating priests in the temple, form a class by itself, quite distinct from *purohits*, *vaidiks* and *pandits*. *Purohits* are those who officiate on special religious sacramental events like the marriage, investiture, funerary rites, obsequies, and other sacramental rituals. They do not as a rule officiate in the regular *archanas* and *pujas* of the routine type of the temple. *Vaidikas* are those who visit households and assist and instruct householders in the worship rituals daily or occasionally. The Pandits are learned barhmins who teach scriptural texts and give public discourses on religious subjects. The temple priests (*pujaris tantris*) usually belong to the priestly families who have served in the temple for generations. They undertake their own special training and initiation (*diksha*) in the particular sectarian *agamas*, and conduct worship on behalf of the people in the temple as per rules of their order of initiation, status or rank.

5. Injunctions (*vidhis*) and rituals (*upacharas*)

The *agama* texts contain injunctions (*vidhis*) and rituals (*upacharas*) of both domestic and temple worship forms in minute details, and a thorough acquaintance with

these prescriptions is one of the major qualifications of a priest by virtue of his initiation. In temples of long standing tradition, where old custom prevails none other than the qualified priest is allowed to enter the sanctuary and touch the image.

Water is one of the most essential requirements for worship in the sanctuary, and it should be ritualistically pure, and it can be collected only by the priest from a running stream, a spring, a natural lake, pond or well exposed to sunlight and fresh air. The use of water in temple worship with reference to the image in the sanctuary is fourfold: (1) *padya* (water offered to the deity for washing the feet); (2) *achamana* (water offered for sipping or rinsing the mouth); (3) *arghya* (water offered as oblation); (4) *snana* (water for bathing the image). Water used for these different functions should be differently mixed with various fragrant substances, and these water containers are to be placed in specific directions in the sanctuary in front of the Deity.

Waving of light before the image of the Deity is a ritual known as *dipa*, *nirajana*, *arati* or *aratrika*. It is done towards the close of the worship sequence. For this purpose camphor (*karpura*) is used or a set of three, five or seven cotton wicks dipped in clarified butter (*ghee*) or in oil. The worshipper who waves the light during worship and the devotee who witnesses this ritual are believed to conquer the dark worlds (of ignorance) and burn up all evil done in this life. The waving of the light is accompanied by ringing of a bell (*ghanta*), blowing of conch (*sankha*), or beating a flat metallic instrument known as *jaya.ghanta*. Hymns of praise are also recited while *arati* is performed. This ritual assumes considerable importance as it is always done before the gathering of devotees. It is considered meritorious for the lay folk to participate in this ritual sequence.

Flowers constitute still another important article for worship. The image in the sanctuary is decorated with garlands of flowers; unstrewn flowers are required for several sequences in the worship.

Fire oblation (*havis*) is offered daily in the morning or at noon in temples where the Vedic influence continue to prevail. It is usual to have a separate enclosure for this ritual known as *homa* or *agni karya*. This enclosure may contain a formal platform (*vedi* or *sthandila*) or a fire-pit (*homa.kunda*) or a mobile metallic fire-hearth (*chula*), into which *ahuti dravya* (articles for oblation) are offered and burnt as *homabali* (burnt offering).

The several rituals that constitute the worship are called *Upacharas* or services. According to *Karanagama* these constitute what is known as the *puja* (worship), signifying the 'fulfilment of the prescribed rituals' (*purayante sarva karmani*) and the attainment of the knowledge of the divine (*jayate jnanam atmani*). This aspect is emphasized in words synonymous with *puja*, namely, *saparya*, *archa*, *varivasya*, *paricharya*, and *upasana* (*Amarakosa* 2,7,34). There are about sixty-four *upacharas* listed in texts like *Tantra-sara* and *Siddha-yamala*. But it is usual to offer only sixteen *upacharas* to the deity, hence the popular expression *shodasc-pachara puja*; this *puja* is performed to the deity as a daily ritual according to the mode of worship known as *archana*.

Shodasopachara puja has got both domestic and temple ritual forms. The details are in the order of the customary reverence shown to a distinguished guest: They are: (1) *asana* (seating), (2) *svagata* (welcoming), (3) *padya* (offering water to wash the feet), (4) *arghya* (offering water to wash the hands), (5) *achamana* (offering water to sip and rinse the mouth), (6) *snana* (providing a bath), (7) *vasana-bhushana* (offering fresh clothes and decorations), (8) *yajnopavita* (offering a fresh sacred thread), (9) *gandha* (offering aromatic substances like sandal paste), (10) *pushpa* (offering flowers), (11) *dhupa* (burning incense), (12) *dipa* (waving lights), (13) *naivedya* (offering four kinds of food), (14) *tambula* (offering betel leaves, areca nut, camphor and spices), (15) *namaskara* (prostrations), (16) *visarjana* (send-off).

When a brief service is expected only five *upa-*

charas are performed, namely: (1) inviting *avahana*); (2) seating (*sthapana*), (3) establishing communion (*sannidhikarana*), (4) worship (*pujana*), including offering water for the feet (*padya*), offering sandal paste (*gandha*), offering flowers (*pushpa*), burning incense (*dhupa*), waving lights (*dipa*) and offering food (*naivedya*), and (5) *send.off* (*visarjana*). This is a normal routine in household worship which is also followed in the temples with moderate means.

In affluent temples, however, many other details are added like offering of ornaments (*abharana*), decorations (*alankara*), holding a mirror (*darpana*), applying unguents (*anulepana*), fanning with a fly-whisk (*chamara-vyajana*), presenting dance and music (*nartana. gita-vadya*), reciting laudatory verses (*stuti* or *stotra*), presenting fire-oblations (*homa*), and providing bed (*sayana*).

6. Symbolism of rituals

As religion itself is a system of sacred symbols the rites and rituals performed in any religious tradition have got their own respective symbolic meanings and functions. Symbolism is an ingredient of both *homa* and *archa* modes of worship. The basic supposition as I have already indicated in the introduction of this article is the understanding that there is interdependence and interaction between the individual plane of human life and the cosmic plane of divine life. As Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao establishes in his book *The Temple Rituals* the individual constitution (*pinda*) and the cosmic organization (*brahmada*) are essentially identical.

7. Some guidelines for an Indian Christian Liturgy

For obvious reasons I want to be very brief in dealing with this section. My guidelines here are very tentative and open to thorough criticism and discussion. I am not giving here a blue-print for an immediate formulation of *an Indian Christian Liturgy*, rather only proposing certain areas of thinking which may be fruitful for those who are really interested in inculturating our own liturgical traditions along the lines of our living religious cultural modes

of life which finds itself in constant exposition to and dialogical encounter with believing and practising religious people of our common cultural milieu. Hence I would like to suggest the following basic principles for developing *Indian Christian Liturgies* according to the pluriform patterns of our living religious, cultural and spiritual heritages:

1. The Hindu religious traditions being so numerous in beliefs and practices and so diversely conditioned by the cultural mosaic of India, to think of an *Indian Christian Liturgy* as commonly relevant to all Christian Communities all over India is beyond any realistic scope.

2. *Liturgy*, being a Community's common worship form liturgical modes must be allowed to evoke according to the exigencies of the community's dialogical interactions with the people of other faiths. Here the local or regional cultural ingredients which are commonly shared by various communities in the same milieu could contribute towards more commonly intelligible forms of worship: hence the scope for many *Indian Christian liturgies*.

3. Drawing inspiration from the living forms of worship practised today by our Hindu brethren as sketched in the previous section we may observe that there are a variety of forms of worship congenial to particular sectarian denominations. As we cannot pattern meaningfully Christian liturgies exclusively according to any one of these sectarian forms to be suitable everywhere in India, more regionalized attempts of inculturation along the lines of the living forms of worship of a particular cultural mode are feasible.

4. The radical difference between the Hindu temple worship which is more in cosmic symbolism, and the Christian liturgy as the historical memory celebration of the redemptive acts of Christ, need not create impasse in the liturgical inculturation. Theologically it is a matter of Christian wisdom to harmonize the functions of the Cosmic events whose lordship is attributed to the same God who enacted his redemptive process historically in and through

Jesus Christ. Our Christian liturgy must be a celebration having proper blending of the cosmic and historic events of one and the same God who speaks to his people in diverse manners and accepts manifold forms of worship from them; the same God also shows people diverse ways of approaching him and worshipping him according to the pluralistic historico-cultural living milieux of various nations and peoples.

5. Liturgy when adapted to the cultural exigencies of the people, and for that matter to our religiously pluralistic community contexts in India, care must be taken that we do not blindly follow the ritualistic system of any tradition or of sects rather mechanically. The Medieval scholastic dictum of *ex opere operato* effectiveness of any ritual is no more Christian, nor the brahmanical or tantric injunctions sufficiently human. Personal freedom and responsible participation of the individuals cannot be dispensed with.

Since "worship" or "liturgy" is made by man and for man, it is left to him to find ways of flexibility, freedom, spontaneity, articulation, symbolism and intelligibility together with other human beings of his living milieu for giving expression to their communitarian responsiveness to God as their common meeting point and ultimate concern. Hence a blind literal adoption of any ritualistic form of a bygone age and culture to suit the life and culture of the people of our living milieu will be restricting our creative and responsible freedom with which we are entitled to give expression to our own religiousness in our own living context.

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